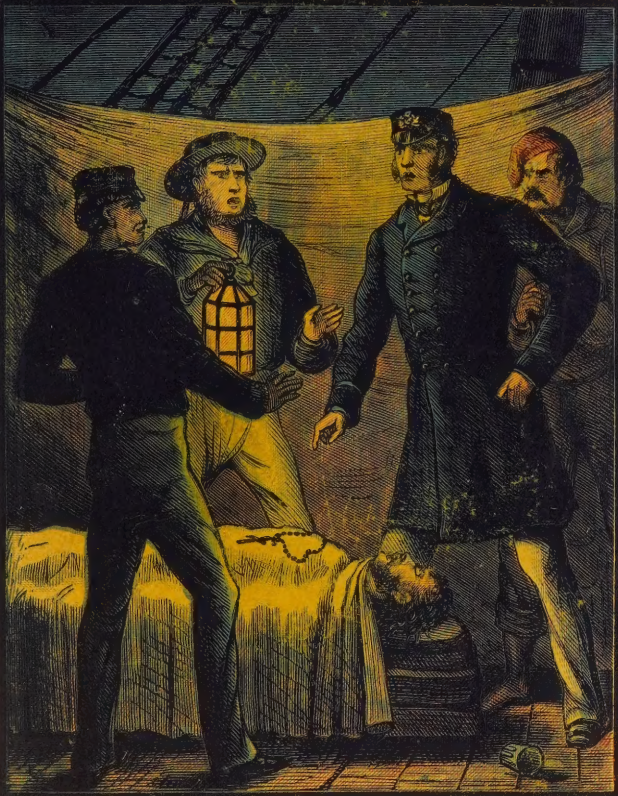
SINGLETON FONTENOY



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SINGLETON FONTENOY.

A NAVAL NOVEL.

BY

JAMES HANNAY,

LATE OF HER MAJESTY'S NAVY.

A New Edition.

LONDON:
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS,
THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE;
NEW YORK: 416, BROOME STREET.

James Hannay (1829-1873) was born at Dumfries. He entered the navy when thirteen years old, and served until 1845. He then devoted himself to literature, contributing to periodicals and writing novels. In 1857 he unsuccessfully contested the Dumfries burghs in the Conservative interest. In 1860 he became editor of the Edinburgh Courant, but resigned in 1864. He was appointed in 1868 consul at Barcelona. This novel was published in 1850.

LONDON:
WILLIAM AND SONS, LAW AND GENERAL PRINTERS,
GREAT QUEEN STREET, W.C.

SINGLETON FONTENOY, R.N.

BOOK I.

THE DREAMER.

CHAPTER I.

Malheur à qui du fond de l'exil de la vie,
Entendit ces concerts d'un monde qu'il envie,
Du nectar idéal sitôt qu'elle a goûté,
La nature répugne à la réalité. LAMARTINE.

OUR story opens in a quiet and solemn chamber—the library of a country house, in one of the northern counties of England. The time is the close of the year 183—. The mellow sunlight of an autumn morning floats, with a colour like old gold, into the room, touches up, as it were with the hand of a master, a portrait by somebody who knew how to make sallowness sublime, illuminates the vellum, and adorns the calf.

Into this apartment there walked, on the morning in question, a man apparently about thirty-five years of age. He was dressed in black clothes, imperfectly brushed, and a white neckcloth, clumsily put on. His face was at once coarse and thoughtful; his manner awkwardly dignified; his eyes were grey and very vivid, but had a vacant kind of look occasionally, from his habit of mental abstraction. As he walked you became aware of a slight deficiency in his gait.

"Mr. Trochee—the Reader!"

"The Reader—Mr. Trochee!"

Having duly introduced him, I may add that he appeared in this library as tutor to the family of Mr. Fontenoy, of Heatherby, which at this time consisted only of one son, a youth still in his teens. Mr. Trochee was what Dr. Johnson called a "sound, sullen scholar," and sprang from a genealogical tree which might fairly be called a tree of knowledge, from the number of pedagogues it had produced. He had a clear head, and no inconsiderable command of that old-fashioned catapult kind of

sarcasm so much in vogue during the last century. He was indeed exemplary in his way; and if you had asked him what *religio* was, he would have replied at once that it was a choriambus!*

He now found the library empty, but he established himself very comfortably at the table with some "scribbling paper" and a book, and in a short time was in the land of day-dreams.

A small door opened noiselessly at a corner of the room, opposite to the side at which he had entered. He did not look up, and consequently did not see the figure which glided in—that of a youth just growing out of boyhood—a youth somewhat "tall for his age," and certainly handsome for any age. Singleton Charles Fontenoy had a slim, graceful figure, pleasing in movement, and elegant in repose, which somehow reminded you of a Persian greyhound. His features were classically handsome, and rather dark; but this last effect was agreeably relieved by blue eyes, which contrasted pleasantly with his very black curly hair and eyebrows. The countenance seemed fitted to express courage and decision, but there lingered upon it that shyness which usually accompanies premature thought and early earnestness; which indeed is but the expression of the confusion of that Eve the soul when it begins to be conscious of its exposure in a strange world, and which Rochefoucauld pronounces preferable to the easy assurance of modish young men.

Singleton, almost immediately on his entry, took hold of the light ladder which rested against the shelves, to the upper of which it was intended to give access (it was a true Jacob's ladder to him), and proceeded to adjust it with an obvious design on a burly quarto.

As he placed his foot on the lowest step, he glanced round at Mr. Trochee with a curious expression half inquiring, and half contemptuous. The tutor's eyes were fixed immovably on his book. Singleton moved upwards to grasp the object of his desires. He had placed the ladder rather carelessly, and ascended it so also,—when—unhappy type of the fate of many seekers after knowledge!—he slipped and fell. The quarto, clutched with eager hand at the moment, thundered down after him, inflicting, as it did so, a slight graze on his right temple.

Singleton burst into a loud laugh as he sprung to his feet, and standing upright met the glance of the astonished tutor, scared by the unwonted noise.

"It's really very odd," said Mr. Trochee, peevishly, "that everything you do, appears to be accompanied by a disturbance!"

"Very," said the boy, pouting with his fine lip in a sulky

* *Viz.* thus scanned—*Rĕligiō*: apparently all some learned men know about it.

manner. Mr. Trochee rose and placed the ladder in what he emphatically called "its proper place."

"Knocking the books about," he continued, while Singleton rubbed his forehead with a white pocket handkerchief, diffusing as he did so an odour of violets which more and more irritated our scholastic friend, who would willingly have handed over all who used perfumes to the prosecution of the Sanitary Commission,—"neglecting your proper studies to run after works with which you have no business!—where are your Latin hexameters? where is your Greek prose?"

The youth made no answer, but the dark pupils of his blue eyes distended, and his breathing grew short and quick. He continued to rub his forehead.

"Come, come," said Mr. Trochee, "your head stood it pretty well, I have no doubt. Let us get to work."

"I tell you what," said Singleton, drawing himself up with an air of weariness and anger, "I am tired of this—tired of reading and hearing about what I do not admire or love; tired of pedantry, and sick of being haunted by the ghosts of the dead from day to day. I am tired of a process of study which can only be compared to that whim of Byron's—drinking out of a skull."

Mr. Trochee opened his mouth in astonishment.

"None of *your* darling ideas seem to be governing mankind," added the youth.

"Go on, Scaliger," cried Mr. Trochee. (This was his notion of irony.)

"I wonder at the coolness with which you can hunt out words in a dictionary," pursued Singleton, "when you know the state of the poor in this very county."

"Bravo, Scioppius! My dear boy," said the tutor, compassionately, "I see that you have been led away by the popular vagaries of the day. All the evils which provoke your learned indignation are attributable to one simple cause. But here's your father."

In came, as he spoke, a tall and rather stout gentleman, between forty and fifty years of age, dressed in a flowing morning gown, and looking very magnificent about the throat. His manner combined the serenity of middle age, with the dignity of a county magistrate. He bowed graciously to Mr. Trochee and his son. He usually, indeed, treated his son with much deference; not on the score of that youth's own merits, but because he was *his* son. But Mr. Fontenoy demands a few lines of description. His was a character which, belonging to a common enough class, must yet be repeatedly illustrated till it is thoroughly understood.

Mr. Fontenoy thought religion—'twas his highest conception of it—a useful engine of state. In his own life, instead of a blessing to himself, it was used rather as a means of annoying other people.

Mr. Fontenoy went to church, and at the name of his Redeemer bowed *à la Talleyrand.*

Mr. Fontenoy would attend the funeral of one of his tenants with all the pomp of yeomanry, and having had an imposing salute fired over his grave, to-day, would put an execution in the house of his widow to-morrow.

Mr. Fontenoy preserved his game most rigidly. However, we shall see more of him as we go on.

"You were saying something, I think?" he asked Mr. Trochee.

"I was just telling your son, sir, that all the evils of Europe"—Mr. Fontenoy drew himself up, with a judicial air—"are attributable to one cause,—the intrusion into political life of *half-read men.*" This was Mr. Trochee's favourite term of contempt, and one which he frequently launched at the heads of the agitators of the neighbouring town of Huskdale, where there is a great manufactory of cotton and charges against the Established Church. The calm and vast simplicity of the proposition duly impressed Mr. Fontenoy; he glanced at his son, who bit his lips and said nothing.

"What gave rise to the conversation?"

"I am afraid Singleton has been acquiring some crude notions," answered Trochee. At that moment, a short, sharp shower pattered against the windows, a few fitful gusts of wind whirled past the leaves as they were driven from the trees to a violent death. Mr. Fontenoy rushed to look out, feeling a pang of terror about the greenhouse, and after exclaiming, with an air of importance, "this will try Peel's Currency Bill!" a dictum perfectly unintelligible to Singleton—left the room.

All this time, the quarto which had fallen had been reposing tranquilly on the floor. Mr. Trochee now picked it up, and proceeded to look at the title-page.

"Why, what is this?" he asked angrily. "What are you doing with this?"

Singleton blushed, looked confused, and muttered something about "both sides of the question."

"Sir," said Mr. Trochee, "you are too young yet for such writers as Bolingbroke!"

When the son of a landed proprietor begins to read Bolingbroke, and talk about the poor, it is quite clear that something desperate must be done. Mr. Trochee had a long secret consultation with Mr. Fontenoy that evening. "I will send him to school," said his parent. To check a tendency towards intellec-

tual speculation, what could have been better? It was resolved upon. Mr. Trochee received a handsome and honourable dismissal soon after, and proceeded to London. He found himself thoroughly tired of teaching people, and therefore set up as a writer for the —— Review, by doing which he effectually secured himself from the possibility of instructing anybody!

And Singleton meanwhile stayed at home, and read whatever he liked, while his father was looking out for an appropriate school. The blue eyes were dim with poring over black and white. Singleton was just then in an intellectual crisis. He had began to doubt the infallibility of Paley, and had not yet met with the writings of Carlyle!

CHAPTER II.

. . . . Rarum hoc in adolescentibus nostris: nam quotusquisque vel ætati alterius vel auctoritati, ut minor, cedit? Statim sapiunt; statim sciunt omnia: neminem verentur; imitantur neminem; atque ipsi sibi exempla sunt!

PLINY THE YOUNGER. Ep. viii. 23.

. . . . Rare this in our young men: for how often does any one of them yield either to the age or the authority of another, as his junior? They grow wise at once: know everything at once: reverence nobody, imitate nobody; and are, themselves, their own models!

THE Lepels had arrived! The Lepels were at Dunreddin! The Lepels were going to give a ball! Such was the news which Mr. Fontenoy's county welcomed with enthusiasm. Such, too, opens the prospect of a lively chapter to the author, entertaining a natural dread of the growing number of readers, who, the moment they come to the word Virtue, skip; who only patronise writers who convey heartlessness in epigrams, as Hannibal carried poison in a brilliant ring.

The Lepels had been a long time abroad, and were now about to settle down permanently in their family mansion,—one of those imposing structures, combining the dignity of age with the grace of colour, which take their name from Queen Elizabeth. When you gazed at it, from the broad plains, shaded with noble trees, in which it was situated—when your eye rested on its stately elevation, and the proud escutcheon graven in front—the antique windows—the raised terrace, bounded by the graceful balustrade—you even wondered how people could leave it for a palace on the Grand Canal or a villa on the Bay of Naples. Probably Mr. Lepel's lawyers could have enlightened you on the point; but at this time all was right with the family. The estates

were not more encumbered than was sufficient to show that the family had made good alliances. All this was very agreeable to Mr. Fontenoy, their neighbour. A link of relationship had joined, in a past age, the two houses, in a way near enough to be interesting, and Mr. Fontenoy and Mr. Lepel had been intimate associates in their youth.

Singleton was at the ball, although some very good judges thought it wrong that so mere a boy should "go out." But this was not the opinion of all; for those who looked at him saw that he was handsome, and those who talked to him found that he was clever. Little Miss Pierrepoint—whom the young Lepel, who was a wit, used to call Sweet P.— pronounced him quite a man, asked him why he never came over to Pierrepoint, and said that Heatherby was a very pretty place. So, indeed, it was; and perhaps that young lady thought upon the subject more than she spoke. Singleton was pleased, shy, confused, and dreamy, perhaps a little sad. He saw all the county people, of whose titles and places he had so often heard before. Mr. Lepel, wishing to ascertain if he had "ambition," asked him if he would like to have a commission in the Yeomanry! Then he danced with Augusta Lepel, a girl who had brought away from Italy, in her own person, a face by Guido and a figure by Correggio; whose tall form undulated gracefully as she moved, like a palm branch carried in a sacred procession, and whose fine forehead and cheeks seemed to be always blushing, as if they were ashamed of being so pretty! Her eyes watched him, as he left her and sauntered down the room, and engaged in conversation with some young gentlemen from Oxford. They had been there to "finish their education!" Poor boys! They did not know that they had not begun it!

Singleton was leaning at one side of the room by himself, in a fit of meditation, watched by a dumpy little girl, who wondered why he did not ask her to dance. A youth approached him, in whom he recognised the young Lepel to whom he had been introduced. He had just come of age, and was of rather striking appearance. His features were sharp and of great mobility, expressive of the most decided sagacity and energy; and his forehead somewhat remarkable by the prominence of the ridge over the eyes, which phrenologists pronounce an evidence of the strength of the perceptive faculties. Singleton could not help thinking it a pity that so good a face should be spoiled by spectacles. He would have been surprised if he had known why they were worn. Lepel was a youth of ambition, and there were many peculiarities about him which his friends were a long time in learning to understand. He now commenced a brisk conversation with Singleton, and struck out some rapid, lively

sketches of the life which he had seen on the Continent. He was very entertaining and agreeable, partly from his keen and playful satire, partly from his ingenious flattery. This last was original; he would praise a beauty for her wit, and a genius for his beauty.

"You will devote yourself now to England, I suppose, and begin your career?" said Singleton.

"Career! oh yes, I suppose so! but what is an unpretending man to do, now-a-days?"

"Politics?"

"Ah! I should be out of place in such matters."

"What is in its place, now, I should like to know?" asked Singleton, with a yawn.

"Nothing," replied Lepel, sharply. "This is a manufacturing country, with agricultural institutions."

"A neat phrase for an address to the electors of Huskdale," his companion said, with a smile.

Lepel laughed, and was very friendly. "We must see a good deal of each other, my dear Singleton," he said, looking very intently in his face, and he had a way of doing this which was a flattery in itself. Then he suddenly seized him by the arm "Look here, my boy!"

"Who? what?"

"Hush! Colonel Bray, knew him at Paris, on a visit in the neighbourhood. My dear colonel!" cried the quick Lepel. They were joined at that moment by two people, Colonel Bray and his wife, who marched towards them. The colonel was a tall, military-looking man, with a large mouth, and a narrow, retreating forehead. He had an appearance of decided weakness. Some people would have thought it ridiculous: to Singleton, it was painful, for his organization was of a character which entered into acute and intense sympathy with everything and everybody. Where the mass of people laughed at a person, Singleton suffered for him. This temperament gave him great quickness, but at the cost of great pain. The colonel came grinning up with his wife on his arm. She was a great deal younger than him; a clever-looking, dark-complexioned little woman, with very black hair, and full, purple mouth. She was certainly pretty, but disagreeably pretty, at least Fontenoy thought so. Whether it was a certain sensuality in her face, that conveyed the idea of ripeness without bloom, or not,—he could not analyse the impression at the instant;—but certainly, he shrunk from her black eyes, decidedly, if indefinably. Her husband came grinning up, as I said, to the two youths, and Singleton fancied that the wife blushed, as if annoyed and ashamed. Singleton was morbidly acute, as I have hinted,

and he fancied again, that there was something peculiar in that blush, and that it was excited by a glance of Lepel's.

"Ah! colonel," said Lepel, "glad to see you. We're going to have a great review of the Yeomanry soon—national defences, eh?"

"National defences" was the poor colonel's hobby. His was the vast mind which started the "Anti-Julius-Cæsarism Society,"—a body organized for the purpose of arming everybody, for fear we should be destroyed for ever, *if* our continental friends equipped a tremendous army—*if* they maintained it—*if* they could get ships for it—*if* it crossed the Channel—*if* we had no navy—*if* there were no gales—*if*, &c. &c.

Lepel introduced Fontenoy, and added that he was interested in the subject. And then he led off the colonel's wife to dance: and it seemed to Singleton that there was a certain air of sarcasm which might have been spared in his manner, and that the couple looked back with a certain air of gay triumph at them, as they walked off.

On went the dance—grace keeping time with melody, as the body with the soul. Singleton gazed upon that brilliant company, and sighed; and there was poetry in that sigh. Ah! if the moon's rays had but souls, what melancholy would they feel, in some scenes where they shine the brightest. Happy rays, that have no soul!

Half the world think they have acquired manner when they have learned to bore each other with politeness. But to be bored, and bear it with grace,—that is a rare accomplishment! Few people could tolerate the colonel—Singleton charmed him. He was so earnest and so kindly, listened so patiently, understood him so well! Only once or twice his eyes wandered away to young Lepel and his partner. How her eyes sparkled, and what a flush!

On went the dance:—it was over. The colonel insisted upon taking Singleton to Mrs. Bray: she was so fond of clever young men! Singleton was left alone with her, for Lepel had moved away. He began to feel that there was a strange fascination about her. He had lost his fluency of speech, and scarcely knew what to say. He noticed that she had a bouquet which he had not seen in her hand before.

"A pretty bouquet that," Singleton said, innocently.

The lady made a gesture; the bouquet fell—out popped a note!

Singleton's hand was on it in an instant, to hide it. The lady gave a little, faint, timorous cry, and fainted back on the bench. In an instant there was a crowd round them—"What's the matter? How did it happen?"—and a great rush.

Singleton's nature seemed to have shot into full growth in that instant, "Stand back!" he cried, almost fiercely, to the pressing mob. "Air!" He seized a smelling bottle. The lady was revived by the powerful salts; she opened her eyes, and seemed as if she would have spoken. By an impulse, Singleton squeezed her hand hard. Thanks to the cruelty, she said nothing, and in another moment she recovered herself.

"Oh dear!" cried the colonel, who had come up at the disturbance. "My carriage, my carriage!" he kept saying vaguely to people round about him.

Lepel was soon there, with an unwonted flush on his cheeks. The colonel led away his wife, who fixed her eyes on Singleton, as she bowed good night to him, with an expression which he long remembered. Away went the colonel, so anxious about the defence of the nation—so careless of himself!

The guests were preparing to go, and Singleton was agitated and thoughtful. And then, he had concealed the note!

Lepel came up to him.

"You are to stay here to-night, Singleton," he said, in a friendly, and rather excited tone.

"How so?"

"Oh! it's all right—do. Your father has gone. They will send you whatever things you want from Heatherby in the morning."

"Very well—you're very kind," Fontenoy answered. He knew what this meant, and he marked Lepel's agitation.

They ascended the stairs to his private rooms: there was a very comfortable fire burning there. Frederick (that was his Christian name) lighted a lamp, and began to talk lightly away, to put himself at ease.

"A regular Tusculum—eh, Singleton? See—what a meerschaum! This belonged to a poor fellow I knew at Bonn—a great radical. He's in Spielberg now. Here are my books. Horace, you see: I like him. Gentlemen read Horace!" And he went on, turning over books and pamphlets very nervously and rapidly. "Here's the best novel in the English language, 'Tristram Shandy,'—a copy with Sterne's autograph in it. Fine, bold, sharp hand he wrote, didn't he?" Then he ran off a few of Shelley's lines:—

> Arethusa arose
> From her couch of snows,—

and came to a dead stop. Singleton was nervous, silent, and embarrassed.

"That was a strange affair," Lepel began, looking up into Fontenoy's eyes, in his peculiar way.

Fontenoy's eyes dropped.

"It was lucky you were the person it happened to. You are young, but wise." Fontenoy remained silent.

"It may be talked about. People *will* ask questions, but men of the world know how to deal with them. They know how to answer!"

"Not how to lie!" said Singleton, drawing himself up proudly.

Lepel's pale face flushed. "Nobody lies, of course. At least, nobody allows any one to tell him so!—This pure world," he added, with a bitter sneer, "makes the distinction, and dubs it Honour!"

"Lepel," said Singleton, "let us be candid with one another. I have discovered a secret of yours, in a most painful way. But I have nothing to do with it, but to regret and forget it. I am no moralist, I am sorry to say, but I love virtue as I love flowers, or a blue sky. It is sweeter to see, and purer to mix with.—Come, come," added Fontenoy, smiling kindly, and looking very pleasing, as he deserved to do, from his good intentions,—"behold a juvenile Mentor! Let us devote this little white creature to the infernal gods!" —Here, he pulled out the fatal note. "Let us put it in the fire!"

Lepel started, as he saw it, then laughed. "Be it so! You are my good genius."

They dropped the note into the flames, where it perished in an instant.

"So dies a martyr!" said Lepel, gaily.—And they dropped the subject.

Lepel then rang the bell, and with the promptitude of the slaves of the lamp, a servant brought up some supper, and at this very late banquet, they were joined by some Oxonians who were guests at the house. There was a lively gentleman from Exeter, a dandy from Christ Church, and two speculative youths from Oriel.

"This is the eve of St. Kilderkin," said Bones, of Oriel.

"Indeed," said Lepel, "what did he do?"

"He built an abbey."

"Did he pay for it?" asked Lepel.

"This is an age without faith," said Bones, opening a pie.

"And without the divine element at all," said his fellow-student of Oriel, pouring out some hock.

Fontenoy looked curiously up. Something of this sort had floated through his serious mind at times. He had begun to feel the want of the age;—a sense of loneliness in life's journey had visited him occasionally. He turned to Mr. Bones.

"You express ideas I have sometimes thought of," he said.

"This absence of faith—do you think it merely temporary, or the natural result of the exhaustion of traditions, and the prelude to a new organization of spirituality?"

"Exhaustion of traditions!" exclaimed Bones, pausing horrified, in the dissection of a partridge, and holding the entire bird on his fork, suspended in air.—"God bless me! Read St. Kilderkin, born A.D. 960, died A.D. 1019! We have published him in ten folio volumes."—Here Bones made a motion to cross himself, and the bird tumbled on his plate.

"Hang all mysticism," said the Christ Church man, comprehensively. "Stick to the good old school. I'm for our regular institutions, and God save the King!"

"Science has destroyed credulity," said Lepel, "and reason has put down fanaticism. Organise labour and increase production, and let those who want 'spirituality' pay for it, if they like."

The time-piece on the mantle-piece struck five.

CHAPTER III.

. . . Who knows not Circe?

COMUS.

It was the evening after the ball. Singleton was sauntering down the main street of Huskdale. He had ridden over on a mission from Miss Lepel, who wanted some tickets for a sacred concert. Huskdale is a manufacturing town, but it combines the most opposite characteristics, and may be said to be in a state of permanent civil war. It returns one Chartist and one Protectionist to Parliament; it has a high and dry rector, and an Anti-State Church Association; it has a Mechanics' Institute, and an Archery Club; it has a church with an organ and a painting, and a common for a field congregation. It ought to have a temple of Janus, and most assuredly, if it had, its doors would never be closed!

It was within an hour of sunset, and the chill breezes of the twilight time were beginning to creep about. Troops of little factory girls were hastening from their dreary prisons to their dreary homes, divided into knots and twining their arms round each other's necks, in unconscious imitation of the wild flowers which they never see! The bells of one or two chapels were noisily beating the air. Singleton enjoyed all that he saw, as he

went along, and swung about in his hand a big bunch of the last roses of the year, which he had bought for the purpose of scenting some of his favourite books with the leaves.

He had turned round a corner, and was proceeding towards the inn where he had put up his pony, when he heard a sharp tapping against a window, which made him involuntarily start suddenly and look round (for he mused rather absently as he walked, after the manner of idealists in general), but not seeing what had caused it, he marched forward again. He had, perhaps, gone another hundred yards, when a figure came running up behind him. Turning round, a young girl almost ran against him; her bonnet had fallen back, her hair was dishevelled, her cheeks flushed. Our young friend was embarrassed.

In the presence of Cleopatra, Singleton would have been easy and graceful; in the presence of the young lady's-maid, who now spoke to him, he was awkward and shy.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the damsel, growing more confused in her turn (she did not expect to find him so good looking), "my mistress wishes to see you."

"Who?"

"A friend of yours, sir," she said. There was something very modest in her manner; so Singleton intimated that he would attend her. Otherwise, he abominated intrigue, and everything that had the look of it.

They stopped at the door of a handsome enough house. He went upstairs to the drawing-room, and found there—Mrs. Colonel Bray!

She was sitting upon a sofa as he came in, and rose up to receive him as the door closed. There was a slight agitation in her manner, which was very graceful. Singleton bowed. He began again to feel the fascination of her presence. The air seemed warmer in it!

"What must you think of me?" she said, in a pretty little tremor, and with a slightly foreign accent, which Fontenoy had not before noticed. "How kind you were! What tact, what grace you showed!" Here she clasped her little white hands together in an oratorical manner. "You so young, too! It was genius! It was inspiration!"

Singleton did not entertain so high an opinion of his last night's exploit, and he could not help smiling. The fair Circe (such was her classic name) was wonderfully put at her ease by it. She continued, "I am very unhappy. We women are sacrificed by a false society. They sell us, and violate nature's harmonies. The fair ought to be given only to the young!" Here Circe looked tenderly at Singleton and adjusted her heavy

black hair. Singleton was modest, virtuous, and high-principled; he was also young and "tall for his age."

Just then there was a great noise on the stairs. "*Oh ciel,*" exclaimed Circe; "the colonel comes! Perfidious man! He said he would not be in till nine! Let me hide you here," and she opened a door.

"No," said Singleton, and in came the Colonel.

"How are you, sir?" said Singleton, quietly, and with a facility of manner which, under the circumstances, raised him very much in Circe's estimation. "I just came in to see how Mrs. Bray was; she seemed ill last night."

"Ah, poor thing," said the gallant colonel, "she has these delicate attacks sometimes." Circe blushed and stole a glance at Fontenoy, who looked very grave.

"My dear," said the colonel, "let us have the lights. I never saw such a person for sitting in the dark. Now, Fontenoy, you shall see my maps. Here is Dover."

They formed quite a family picture. There sat the colonel with a map and a pair of compasses, with the patient Singleton listening to him. The fair Circe was opposite, with a piece of embroidery, and before her lay a little volume, published at Brussels. It was a "philosophical" French novel, written by a pure female enthusiast, and containing the history of a young woman of superior genius, who ran away from a great, monstrous, moral marquis, to whom she was married, with a divine galley-slave.

"A is the fort," said the Colonel; "B is the enemy's army in a flotilla; C is our fleet running away from the gun-boats; D——"

"Stands for dunce," said the playful Circe.

"Mind your own work, my dear," said her husband, gently. Circe resumed a love-scene, between Adéle and the tender *forçat*.

"I am afraid it begins to get late," said Singleton, looking at his watch.

"Oh, wait a little longer," said the colonel. "E——"

A slight sound was perceptible in the street, shortly afterwards. Circe blushed, as Fontenoy looked up.

It was a musical instrument, and accompanied by a rather musical voice. Clearly it was not an ordinary itinerary performer.

The colonel was drawing a trigonometrical figure, and wholly occupied with it. Singleton's attention involuntary wandered away, as the music became more clearly audible. He began to see that he was performing in a comedy, for the music was a serenade. Poor colonel!

Unfortunately for Circe, it was a fine, clear, still night; so soon the following stanza was audible:—

> Charmer fair—should thy fancy move thee,
> Yet, to declare, that thou dost not love me—
> After all I have felt and spoken,
> Would my faith, or only my heart be broken?

"What's that cursed row?" broke in the colonel, starting to his feet, while Circe jumped up also, looking very angry and frightened.

"It's to the people in the other house," she answered.

"It ain't tenanted," cried the colonel, and he ran to the window.

"Save me again," whispered Circe, pressing Singleton's hand. He seized his hat.

"Good night, colonel." The colonel ran down after him. Singleton saw a figure in the street, retreating. He followed it, and at a safe distance found Mr. Frederick Lepel.

"Why, hillo, Fontenoy."

"Oh, it's you," said Singleton. "You usually serenade people when their husbands are in, do you?"

"What, Mentor, out on the loose," said Lepel, with a facetious sneer. "Circe's been trying her fascinations with you, eh? I suppose this is one of a series of 'philosophical experiments' of hers. Bravo! Three cheers for Madame ——."

"What does all this mean?" asked Singleton.

"You'll know it all by-and-by. My boy, you won't be a dreamer all your life; or, if you are, so much the worse for you. You may write romances, if you like, but let me act them."

In these words, Lepel accurately and acutely defined their respective characters. Singleton said nothing, but fell into a fit of musing, and they walked, without speaking, to the George Inn, where their horses were. Singleton was a mere boy; but how fast he was growing.

The colonel and his philosophical lady left Huskdale next day. I have touched very lightly on the incident in Singleton's career in which they figured. It was necessary to influence his character and illustrate Lepel's. This worthy couple now make their final exit from these pages,—not, I trust, without having borne testimony to the merits of their respective schools. The husband may represent certain alarmists, calculated to bring weak-minded gentlemen to Bedlam; the wife, certain philosophical teachers, who catch the weak by their sweet and cloying diction, as flies are caught by honey.

Europe is now invaded by a band of female warriors, who sacrifice their feminine delicacy for the sake of literary and political influence, as the ancient Amazons seared their breasts that they might handle the bow.

CHAPTER IV.

Currite ducentes subtemina, currite, fusi.
CATULLUS, *Carm.* 61.

Spin the Fates' threads, and mix them as you spin.

It was a beautiful autumn morning. The sun was out, and Augusta Lepel was smiling! A month had passed since Mr. Trochee's departure, and yet not a word of Singleton's going to school. Perhaps he owed the parental forbearance to the kind influence of old Mr. Lepel, one of the best and kindest of men, though weak—paternally indulgent to all the youth of his acquaintance, lovingly fond of his wife and daughter, and exceedingly proud (for which I am afraid we shall have in due time to pity him) of his only son and heir, the clever and ambitious Frederick. Singleton, accordingly, was without an instructor—except Augusta, who taught him a great deal. She was twenty-three, Singleton not quite sixteen, but precocious, as we know. She was highly gifted, and Singleton very studious; so he made great progress!

Out upon the terrace at Dunreddin, at noon, were a large party, enjoying the warm rays, which needed all their power to temper the naturally chilly air. Fontenoy *père* was talking earnestly with old Mr. Lepel, and glancing occasionally at Augusta, who was interchanging light, gay dialogue with Singleton. What did this portend? The Oxonians were gathered in a respectful semi-circle round the lady of the house, and duly devoting themselves to her entertainment. What a beautiful morning!

"Now," cried Frederick Lepel, "this is what people call 'completely English!' Here we are, amusing ourselves and doing nothing in the most comfortable manner, regardless of the busy hum of yon town," pointing to Huskdale, whose spires peeped above the horizon, "and quite satisfied that we are the finest people in the world."

"Well, your inference?" asked Mr. Bones.

"Oh, I'm too lazy to draw inferences this fine day," said the lively Fred. "But isn't the picture characteristic? By Jove, I believe the English upper classes are the idlest people in the world. We lounge over the sciences, dawdle through literature, yawn over politics. A revolution that convulses Europe is only

something new to 'talk about' to us, and a movement that threatens the empire is considered nothing but 'a bore!'"

Mr. Fontenoy thought that a lively young man was a standing insult to the gravity of middle age, so he listened very coldly to Frederick's speech. But Mr. Lepel was highly pleased with him, and said—

"Well, Fred, you must show a good example. Begin!"

"What a curious effect the appearance of the moon has at this hour!" remarked Augusta, looking up at the pale crescent in the blue sky.

"It is an emblem of Faith—paling before the gross material splendour of the sun of commerce," said Mr. Bones.

"I carry a moon of that shape on my coat-of-arms," said Mr. Fontenoy.

"It's very pretty," said Mrs. Lepel.

"How grateful we ought all to be, for our blessings," said her husband.

"The moving moon went up the sky,"

quoted Singleton, from the "Ancient Mariner."

"She is very like green cheese," said Frederick.

As he spoke, a servant appeared, and handed him a newspaper that had just arrived. He seized it eagerly and tore it open; it was the *Huskdale Courier*, a leading journal of the county in the liberal interest. He turned over the pages, and uttered an exclamation of delight.

"What is it?" asked his father.

"The beginning;" answered Frederick, with his eyes brightening, while the whole party gathered round him. "They meet to-day in Huskdale, to petition for ——'s dismissal. Two mills have stopped. The crops are bad—everything's in motion. Let us go into town. Who'll go?"

He turned round to them, with excitement in his whole figure. Most of the young men expressed their readiness for anything.

"I'm tired of the pheasants," said Farquhar, the Christ Church man; "anything for a change."

"But, Fred," said Mr. Lepel, "have you made up your mind—be cautious, you know."

"Oh, yes," he replied; "mind quite made up—packed with principles as neatly as a carpet bag. But there's no time to lose. I'll order the phaeton;" and away he went, followed by all the youths of the party.

"Singleton," cried Mr. Fontenoy to his son, "you will be very careful what you do, if you please. Remember, I am in the

commission of the peace; I have no wish to see a Wilkes in *our* family."

Augusta looked rather anxious as they left, and hung on her mother's arm; Mr. Lepel talked merrily about the buoyancy of youth. Mr. Fontenoy was sulky. The women expressed their kind natural sympathies. The youths drove off.

The town of Huskdale was agitated to the depth of its dark abysses. It was now drawing towards the close of one of those unfortunate years which intervened between the Reform Bill and the formation of the Conservative Government. A bad harvest had followed a bad harvest. There was a depression in commerce, and this was succeeded by the moral miasma which always rises from stagnant trade. Wanting food, the masses resorted to agitation, and talked of principles, while Government was thus hampered with the double task of relief and resistance. In this predicament the country looked alternately at riots and at cabinet councils; and the question seemed to resolve itself into Hunger and Dragoons.

Lepel's party rattled gaily into the town, which was all alive with emotion. There, marched troops of mechanics along the pavements, talking to each other, some with earnest gestures, others laughing, with the devil-may-care desperation of men who knew that all this would end in no relief. Some of the shops were closed; at the doors of others, white-aproned tradesmen were standing, and looking out at the passers-by. Small bodies of police defiled quickly, but quietly, down the pavements, carefully avoiding the gaze of the populace; a detachment of soldiers were in barracks, under arms, near the scene of the intended meeting. 'Twas altogether a grand constitutional spectacle—the town of Huskdale that afternoon; yet, strange to say, the effect of the whole was lively and cheerful. A day of grievances is always a gala-day for Huskdale.

The phaeton, drawn by a couple of neat grays, drove up the main street. Suddenly Lepel drew up by the kerb, flung the reins to Farquhar, and jumped out. They saw him run into some place there, and looking up at the house, observed "Huskdale Courier" in large letters above the first-floor windows.

"I say," said Farquhar to Fontenoy, "What is he going to do there? Radical paper the 'Courier,' ain't it? I don't mind a lark, you know, but we must not have any row."

Lepel came out again at that instant, attended by a little man in black, with a pen behind his ear. "We get down here," he said. Down they jumped. A man came up and took charge of the phaeton. They went with the man from the "Courier" office, and reached the Hall—a huge building used for many purposes—where the meeting was to be held. It was near the

time announced. An enormous mob pressed against the entrance, squeezing, crushing, groaning, like a thick forest stirred by a winter gale. "Help!" and "Oh God!"—these were the sounds that broke from the dense crowd, varied occasionally by a sharp cry. The multitude moved every now and then in quick, short convulsions; for that multitude throbbed with a common heart, and the heart diseased.

Lepel and his friends passed in through a private door, and emerged on a spacious platform or gallery, bounded by a rail, which stood at one end of the hall. They sat down at the corner in front. The platform was quickly filling; suddenly the hall doors flew open. Like a roaring torrent in poured the crowd. Before you could have breathed thrice that huge building was swarming with life. Singleton was profoundly moved. It was the first time in his existence that he had seen anything of the sort. He hid his face in his hands for a moment with emotion. He began to feel what politics might be; then he thought for an instant of the library at Heatherby, and it flashed upon him that he was the most worthless dreamer under God's sky. He, whose thoughts had wandered through creation, what an insignificant being he was here! His eyes turned to Lepel. Never had he seen him so elated. In the centre of each pale cheek stood a single flushed spot. His eyes sparkled with the steady permanent gleam of awakened, unsleeping excitement; and what should dull that dangerous fire lighted by ambition in his active soul? His fair, delicate, mobile brow worked uneasily. He never looked at Singleton; his bright eyes were steadily fixed. Slight nervous gestures showed his agitation. You would have thought him possessed by a devil—and so he was!

Through the great crowd there now passed an emotion of excitement and expectancy. So hum the pines when the wind begins slowly to rise in the great western forests.

Singleton glanced at those who occupied the platform on which he and his friends were. In the chair, as president, sat the mayor of the town. A respectable, well-to-do tradesman, all his sympathies were with the *bourgeoisie* to which he belonged—the most stolid, the most immovable, the most bigoted of factions. Aristocracy adorns itself with a sentiment; the mob are elevated by their passion; but the *bourgeoisie* has but its money to give it interest or inspiration. The mayor thought it all quite well to elevate the people, but much more important to lower the poor-rates.

Beside the chairman was seated a far greater person—the Reverend Mr. Rutter, rector of St. George's parish, Huskdale—the indomitable High-church leader of the uncompromising

Tory party. You saw as much in his large, bald forehead, and quick eyes. Mr. Rutter was a large man, but

Mens agitat molem, et *magno se corpore* miscet! *

He was very clever also. He was at once a sturdy foe to dissent, and a great cause of it, and his zeal against dissenters usually had these two results—to deprive their chapels of steeples, and to fill them with proselytes. He was a strong Tory, more zealous at public meetings than in the pulpit; and notwithstanding his sacred profession, was hardly ever so severe on the devil as on a Radical editor! The more excited portion of the meeting hooted him, which disturbed him very slightly. He glanced round the platform, and met the eyes of Singleton, whom he knew very well (for he and Mr. Fontenoy were great friends), and bowed to him, with considerable surprise at seeing him there.

. . . And now the expectancy of the crowd grows stronger and stronger, and the excitement increases like a growing fire. Up rises the chairman with a paper in his hand, quivering in his nervous grasp. The crowd greet him with a roar, such as you hear in Spain when the bull appears in the circus. He formally opens the business, and sits down again.

And then rose a well-known public speaker to move the first resolution.

Singleton had never heard a public speaker, and he now lent on his arm with his eyes fixed on this man, and listened intently. The language was very different from Bolingbroke's, to be sure, but its force and applicability, its rugged energy, and Fescennine sarcasm, were invincible. The meeting was mad with indignation when he talked of the sufferings of the operatives and the hopelessness of legislative aid. Singleton was exhausted by the excitement of his sympathy alone, and drops of heavy perspiration stood on his brow. The orator almost screamed as he pronounced a peroration of invective, and his choking syllables were lost in the thunders of applause which greeted his conclusion. There was a pause and heavy breathings through the crowd; men turned up their hot faces to the roof, as if they were praying for rain.

The people on the platform whispered to each other eagerly. The feeling of the meeting was obviously intense. The whole of the manufacturing districts would be affected by the report that went forth to-morrow. Dangerous orators were to follow. Orthodoxy must do something. In the absence of justice, let the people try the Reverend Mr. Rutter!

* Mind moves the mass, and mixes itself with the great body.
VIRGIL, *Æneid*, Book vi. v. 727.

Another agitator followed. Again came a whirlwind of passion. The meeting was overcrammed. There was a loud cry of "Police," a man fainting, a shout for air, and ten minutes of confusion. Singleton was more and more moved. He would burn his "Homer" next day. The speaker said that ten thousand able-bodied men were destitute of employment, and soon would be of bread. Singleton resolved that the "Ancient Mariner" should follow. A dreamer! He was a drone and dunce,—the most contemptible of mankind!

Up rose Mr. Rutter. There was something majestic in it. Virgil's *vir pietate gravis* was not more calmly grave and solemnly decorous. Mr. Rutter looked like the British Constitution in gaiters! He was a grand impersonation of our national respectability. When he rose, however, there was a tremendous burst of groaning and yelling, opposed by a stout cheering from some of his faithful admirers. Great noise followed. Mr. Rutter adroitly seized an opening; his fluent rhetoric shot through the tumult as Arethusa through the sea. He secured a hearing.

"This is a d—d sensible old fellow," whispered Farquhar to Fontenoy.

Singleton laughed. His emotion was subsiding under the influence of Rutter's cold watery stream of speech. But it did not diminish the influence on his mind of the previous harangues. He had acquired thus early a habit of looking at the souls of things more than their forms.

Mr. Rutter was successful after the fashion of his kind. If the people, wanting bread, got from him nothing but a stone, at least it was a stone of the highest polish. He was miraculously plausible, and to hear him talk, you would have thought hunger one of the worst of crimes. He recommended resignation, and condemned complaint; and down he sat, amidst conflicting noises. Singleton buried his face in his hands and began to muse, when suddenly Farquhar seized his arm. He turned anxiously round. What was his astonishment, and that of his set, when Lepel rose, and presented himself to the meeting! There were loud cries of "Who are you?" "What's your name?"

"Gentlemen," said he, "I am Mr. Lepel, of Dunreddin, in this neighbourhood, a country gentleman; and though a country gentleman, a friend to industry and a lover of the people!"

Singleton stared at him with astonishment.

"Bravo, bravo!" cried three or four voices; and there was a loud cheer.

"I saw with astonishment, as I came here to-day, the streets of your peaceful and industrious city filled with soldiers; and I

confess I thought as I did so of Rome sold by the Prætorian guards."

If Lepel had been studying agitation and the people of Huskdale for five years, he could not have hit on a more effective opening, or an allusion better calculated to inflame the passions which Mr. Rutter had been endeavouring to soothe down. From the whole of the multitude there burst a tremendous cheer.

On he went, with equal success. You felt that you were listening to a man who had found his proper vocation. Vigorous, copious, accurate, and graphic, without a ray of imagination, but with so much that everybody could appreciate, his language seemed the sublime of common sense. And then he indulged perpetually in sarcasms, not fanciful and ingenious, but broad, sensible, and funny. He attacked, not like a gladiator, but an English bruiser. It was Cobbett all over, and Cobbett when he was young. His personification of a Tory lord of the Marquis de Carabas' school, "preserving rigidly everything but his tenantry," and "once in five years making a great parade of returning ten per cent. of a rent that was fifty per cent. too high," brought down roars of applause from the Radicals, who recognised the portrait; and when he grew warmer, and alluded to "reverend oppressors of the poor," and "ungracious ministers of grace," the roof trembled with the thunder of the cheering which followed; and Singleton looking at Mr. Rutter, saw that anger was rising to his forehead, and that he was writing with indignation.

"There was a time, gentlemen," said Lepel, "when the labouring men of this kingdom had daily good beef and beer."

"When was that?" asked Mr. Rutter, starting up in great wrath.

"Not in your time, we may be sure," said the orator, with great composure, and a sublime wave of his hand, while loud laughter, and cries of, "Oh," and "Shame," from Mr. Rutter's supporters followed. "Really this irritation scarcely becomes so meek and exemplary a pastor! But we have now rabidity from the most unexpected quarters. We are daily hearing violent harangues against the popular party, and this 'black vomit' is the deadliest symptom of our political fever!"

This was a metaphor peculiarly adapted to the audience, and was wonderfully applauded.

Lepel concluded with a violent peroration; as he sat down, cheering burst again and again from the meeting.

"Three cheers for Mr. Lepel!" cried somebody.

They were given gloriously; and as he turned to his friends, they saw his hands trembling violently, and his features covered

with a light dew of perspiration which sparkled on the purple flush.

Every obnoxious resolution was carried immediately. The people on the platform rose to go away, and Lepel and his friends went out again by the private door. As they gained the street, he was recognised by the populace and loudly cheered, much to the annoyance of Mr. Farquhar. "Come, my boys," said Lepel to his companions, "we'll slip away, and dine at the 'George.'"

They went to the inn in question, one of the best in the town, and there they found a private room, with fire blazing, neat wax candles ready for lighting, cloth elegantly laid, and sherry and madeira comfortably airing themselves.

"Why, one would think they had expected us," said Farquhar.

"Yes," said Lepel, drily, and with a grin, "it looks like it. Here are the true friends of the people!" And so saying, this great patriot seized the sherry with his usual liveliness, and mixed himself a tumbler of wine and water. "Are we justified, my friends," he continued, "in drinking claret in the present state of the labouring population?"

All this was doubtless very facetious, but the truth is that Singleton was getting somewhat shocked by it, and Lepel, perhaps seeing as much, changed his tone, and rung the bell for dinner with his "spectacle" look. He had wonderful versatility of manner, this young gentleman, and was born to be an intriguant.

The dinner was now brought up, plain, but very good; soup, a pair of fowls, neck of mutton and turnips, game, and Stilton and celery. They talked very little during the repast, but after the cloth was removed, and port and madeira with dessert fairly established, Lepel resumed his jolly look, filled up a glass, and said, "Gentlemen, I give you the people, the only source of legitimate power!" with a delicious leer.

There was a roar of laughter at this, and "What a shame, old boy!" from his easy companions. Lepel's vanity was highly delighted. With the most fiery ambition he was very vain.

"Pretty fellows, you are," he said, with a laugh, "not to have told me yet, what you think of my speech."

"I tell you, candidly," said Farquhar, tossing off his wine, "that it was a d——d deal better than I ever thought you could do. By Jove, it was first-rate, but it's cursed wrong you know, and all that."

"It reminded me of Tierney," said Singleton, who had read a good deal of oratory. "It was excellent."

"It was admirable," said Bones. "But I say nothing of its

principles, mind you." And Bones, who was of a dark complexion, looked very grave.

Lepel's eyes sparkled as he heard all their encomiums. "Never mind that last question at present. I'll show them what a gentleman can do when he takes to agitation. The mob have been in the hands of bagmen too long. Pass the wine, my boys—

Les vrais amis de la bouteille,
Sont chéris de l'Etre Divin!

as my poor friend Dupuis used to sing." The wine passed round immediately, and there was many a lively remark and gay boast.

"Let us drink the memory of Rochefoucauld," said Lepel. "His maxims are like cracker-bonbons, smart, snapping, and devilish good things."

"The memory of Catullus," said Farquhar, taking the notion up in his turn. "He was the most brilliant fast man of antiquity, and can be compared to nothing but Apollo out on the loose."

"The memory of that pope,—I have forgot his name," said Bones, ecclesiastical in his wildest moments, "who originated the phrase *Bibamus Papaliter!*"

"The memory of Chatterton," said Singleton, with his blue eyes beaming fire, "the most admirable genius from the days of Shakspeare to the birth of Shelley, who gained an immortality before he was eighteen."

This was received with enthusiasm, and the memory of these favourites duly honoured, much as the ancients themselves honoured their dead, by pouring wine on their ashes.

They had just drunk Singleton's toast, when there was a small, curious tapping at the door heard, which produced an immediate silence.

"Enter," cried Lepel.

The door opened, and there appeared—a boy of singnlar aspect.

He was dressed in youthful corduroys, and a black waistcoat. His shirt sleeves were tucked up, displaying smutty arms. On his mouth there was a smile and a smudge of ink. In one hand he held a paper cap, of coronal shape; in the other he carried a long strip of printed paper. With this advancing, he presented it to Lepel.

"Behold a cacodæmon!" cried Lepel.

"I'll wait for the proof, sir," said the boy,—"the wondrous boy,"—seating himself in a chair, and tucking up his youthful legs, with the most consummate ease. "They're a-going to press early this week."

"What a doosed mysterious fellow you are, Fred," said Farquhar. "What's this go?"

"We shall see," said Lepel, mysteriously. Here he rang the bell: the waiter duly appeared. "Coffee;" and he added, "Bring paper, ink, and pens, and a basin of cold water.—Now, some of you fellows, give that youth a glass of port: he is one of the Slaves of the Lamp of Knowledge."

The boy drank tranquilly, and composed himself to sleep!

In a short time up came the coffee, &c. Lepel soused his face in the cold water, and bathed his forehead eagerly, while his friends watched him, and wondered what he was going to do. He soon sat down, drank some coffee, then seized pen and ink. In a few moments he had dismissed the proof, and he flung it over to Singleton and the others. It was part of that afternoon's speech.

"Why, hang it! you're not editing the 'Courier?'" said Farquhar.

"No," said Lepel, quietly, and beginning to cover a sheet of paper with writing at an astonishing rate. His rapid pen went forward, and seemed to pour out its sharp clear characters by magic.

"Now for a few lines for the Poet's Corner, my boys! What say you? Epigram on Rutter—quick!"

Between them all they knocked up the following

EPIGRAM ON A HEAVY PREACHER.

Poor Booby makes a sad mistake,
From which amusement we may reap;
When he the conscience should awake,
He sends the sinner off to sleep!

When all are snug within their pews,
He's great on Origin of Evil!
But I've my own peculiar views,
I think his sermons are—the Devil!

ACER.

"Now, boy," said Lepel, "off like the wind;" and the imp vanished most dramatically.

"I have begun my career!" Lepel cried, flinging away the pen.

And immediately after he summoned the waiter, settled the bill, and they drove away.

It was a beautiful evening, and the sky was populous with stars, as they dashed along the road to Dunreddin; and the pleasant bright moonlight made the house beautiful and the avenue cheerful. What a change from the excitement of the town, and the day!

The ladies were upstairs in the drawing-room at tea. Our

party soon joined them. Mrs. Lepel was playing chess with Ellen Pierrepoint, who had come over during their absence. Augusta was leaning back on the ottoman, reading poetry. Singleton's father was teasing a little, queer pug-dog, with a coat like Berlin wool.

Frederick marched in first, as usual.

"Dear me, Ellen, you have broken the flag off that castle!" said his mother.

"Emblemetic of the fate of the oligarchy," said Frederick, laughing. "How is the sweet P.?" he continued; for, owing to his plain, sensible, off-hand manner, he had a license from young ladies which was not conceded to more romantic youths. But Ellen was not likely to find fault with anything he did. She received him with a frank, gay smile, full of light and colour. But Frederick cared far more for a cheer. Misguided youth!

"Well," asked his mother, "was there a meeting?"

"Yes," said Frederick, quietly.

Ellen looked up. Why did he not go and sit down beside her?

"Well, Fred," pursued his mother, "tell us about the proceedings."

"Ask Singleton."

"Let me congratulate you on the accession of an orator."

"Do you mean to say you spoke in public, Frederick?" asked Mrs. Lepel.

"Yes, mamma, I did."

Mrs. Lepel looked very grave. Augusta closed her volume, and looked up.

"Where's my father?" asked Frederick.

"There's a gentleman with him in the study, who came about seven o'clock."

"Do you know who it is?"

His mother rang the bell.

"Who is with your master, Thomas?"

"The Rev. Mr. Rutter, from Huskdale, ma'am."

CHAPTER V.

Spes et præmia in ambiguo: certa, funera et luctus.
TACITUS, *Hist. Lib.* ii. 45.

Hopes and rewards were matter of ambiguity: deaths and grief—certain.

Next day about noon Singleton was sitting in the library at

Heatherby—which was only about a mile and a half from Dunreddin—reading Jeremy Taylor. Every now and then he laid down the volume, and found his thoughts wandering to the proceedings of the day before. His excitement seemed to him now very foolish and useless. It had been an affair of the imagination—like his sympathies with the hero of a romance—he began to think. What could *he* do, to ameliorate evils? He had, or thought he had, quite a deficiency in those qualities which seemed to mark his friend Frederick Lepel out for a worker and mover. Besides, could the race be permanently much elevated? Was it not always the same story over again, this history of theirs? Barbarism, wars, despotism, civilization, corrupted civilization, decay—barbarism over again!

He paced up and down the room in a fit of melancholy meditation; he gazed out of the windows wistfully; the world seemed covered with a sickly haze. He pined for action of some sort. "How much better," he thought, "is the honest woodman, who cuts down an oak to feed the wood fire that warms his family, than either the enthusiast who dreams in its shade, the poet who describes it, the scientific man who measures it, or the botanist who classifies it!"

A servant, at this period of his speculations, entered the room with a note for him. It was a triangular, pink, perfumed little affair, pleasant to the eye, and grateful to the sense. He took it from the salver; the servant withdrew.

It was from Augusta Lepel.

This was the first time he had ever received a note from her, though he saw her constantly, and the two families, indeed, were in the closest intimacy. So, it made a kind of little era. It ran as follows:—

"Dear Singleton,

"Will you join a little pic-nic excursion to the ruins of Trevor Abbey, this afternoon? Mr. Bones and his friends wish to see it before they go, which must be soon. Come over at once. Besides, I have something to say to you. We are all alarmed about Frederick. Enough:—come.

"Augusta."

The truth was, that the party at Dunreddin were rather in a state of uneasiness that morning. The London papers which had come down, were full of details about what they called the "disturbed state of the manufacturing districts." Rumours, too, had reached them from Huskdale, that there had been disturbances in the town the night before. Mr. Lepel was silent, gloomy, and thoughtful all breakfast-time, and scarcely spoke a

word. Mrs. Lepel appeared with difficulty to preserve her calmness. Frederick did not come down to breakfast at all, but breakfasted in bed; and before eleven o'clock the same imp whom Bones and Farquhar had seen the day before at the "George," was observed by them in the avenue, giving a parcel to one of the servants, and then rode back to Huskdale, on a butcher's pony, in a style which would have excited the admiration of his brother demons of London to an unnatural pitch of envy. The two Oxonians, as they saw this, were smoking in a leaning position against the garden wall.

"I tell you what," said Farquhar, filliping the white ash from his cigar, "I'm off south very soon."

"We'll see Trevor to-day, then," said Bones, pensively.

"That fellow Fred will get himself into a scrape, I see," Farquhar went on. No good ever comes of what's irregular. If a man must be public, let him go under somebody's wing. There was young Sickles: Lord Debosh brought him in for the Snugglesborough seat. Sickles voted against the party—only by accident. He routed him out directly afterwards; and I'm told the poor fellow's redoosed to editing a newspaper! Now——"

Here Frederick Lepel approached them, and Farquhar stopped what he was saying; for he was rather afraid of him, and perhaps anywhere else but in his own place would have fought shy of him altogether.

"Well, oh ingenious youths!" began Frederick, with his usual quiet, satirical smile, "what are you going to do to-day?"

"We are thinking of going to see the Abbey," Bones replied.

"Very good; youth is the season for amusement!" said Lepel, with a facetious paternal air. He was barely twenty-two, but he was old in energy—and some other things, as we shall see. "The Abbey's on our property, you know," he added; "at least the ruins of it are. Come, Bones, you shall have it at a moderate valuation. We'll build it by estimate, and rig you up as an abbot from the 'property' stock of the Huskdale theatre!"

While they were laughing at this proposal, it was announced to the speaker that his father wished to see him in the study; at which the laugh was renewed against himself. The two Oxonians very well knew what this sort of interview meant in general; they little understood how differently Lepel viewed it.

"*Au revoir*," he cried, waving his hand; "I shall not be long." And Farquhar nodded and laughed.

We will follow Frederick.

He found his father, who was a fine venerable old man, drawing towards sixty, with a sweet serene countenance,—"a

lively eye and a benevolent smile,"*—seated with much formality in his arm-chair. He was not remarkable for energy of character, or indeed, for his intellectual qualities generally; but if mediocre, he was agreeably mediocre. He had been educated in the worst prejudices; but if they had warped his nature, they had not spoiled it; and as for his disposition, nothing could contaminate that.

"Sit down, Frederick," he said, after shaking hands with him affectionately. Frederick had his spectacles on: there was an air of calm enthusiasm about him which it was refreshing to look at. He awaited his father's words with profound attention and filial deference.

"Frederick," his father began, "Mr. Rutter was over here from Huskdale last night."

Frederick gave a slight bow.

"I heard from him of your proceedings, yesterday, at this meeting. I am very much surprised, and, I may add, pained at your behaviour. Dear me," he went on, agitated with the thought, "you will compromise us all. Such violent language, such unscrupulous hostility to all that is established! These are dangerous times."

"The more need for the gentlemen of England to exert themselves," said his son, mildly but firmly.

"But consider, my dear boy, consider the family. That is the link. Isn't there something—Burke, I rather fancy—" Mr. Lepel looked puzzled for a moment, but the quotation escaped him. "At all events, you must see that such radicalism is impossible to persons in our position, an old, well-connected family. Frederick, just ask yourself this, what would Lord Sycamore, whose wife presented your sister, our connection, as everybody knows he is,—what would he say to such a speech as you made? God bless me, if it should get abroad!"

"Get abroad," thought his son, "what will he say to the 'Courier?'" Frederick turned a little pale, as he thought of all he had plunged into.

"You have very good talents," continued Mr. Lepel, "talents that may lead to any reasonable position. The estate is entailed, as you know. What an authority you may be, with care! If this false step has not ruined all!" he concluded, playing with a pen nervously, and adjusting himself uneasily in his chair. The old gentleman had been not a little moved by all this; he had that timorous apprehension of publicity, change, and excitement, so natural to one educated entirely in the old school, and who had lived all his life in wealth and good society. He had

* D'Aubigné, of the late Dr. Chalmers. "*Travelling Recollections*" (Book 2nd).

always had the highest opinion of his son's powers, and had, of late, begun to fear his character.

"I have had nothing but the greatest kindness from you," began Frederick, seriously and impressively, "but I like to see kindness, like other natural blessings, such as light, extended to all the world; and I wish you to make that goodness which cheers your own circle, animate and benefit a wider sphere. I am sure you will recollect," pursued Frederick, artfully, "what your favourite Johnson says of goodness which is limited in its operation, that it 'wants the sacred splendour of munificence.' Now, my dear sir, what are the facts regarding the state of the English lower classes?" So saying, Frederick secured the old gentleman's attention, opened a brief, ingenious, and lucid statement, and concluded by appealing to his sympathy in favour of his exertions in the cause of "the masses."

Mr. Lepel was considerably moved. He was a very kind-hearted man, as I have said, and besides was one of those who, holding conservative opinions, had begun dimly to look on the Reform Bill as a measure that, once passed, must necessarily lead to further results. He had opposed the Reform Bill; but was it worth while to carry on an antagonism that had already been defeated, and which was possibly morally wrong? He remained for a few minutes in deep reflection.

Suddenly he rose up. "Frederick, I feel that it is impossible that you can carry on a public agitation. But, I tell you what: I am afraid it is too true that the lower orders have never been properly considered. Every man can do good in his own sphere. We will look to our tenants. You and I can go over the rent roll together. We will abate the rents wherever we can, and retrench to make up the difference."

It was lucky for Mr. Frederick Lepel, that he possessed in an eminent degree that command of countenance so necessary to the patriot,—otherwise, he must have been overwhelmed by this burst of the old gentleman's. For a moment he was silent, actually silenced by this stroke so unconsciously given him by his father, who could not have hit on a better, if he had been trained in diplomacy. By particularly good fortune, there was a slight tap at the door at that instant. Augusta entered to say that the party were just about to start. Her fair face with its fresh hues was quite a relief. The truth is, Augusta had had an idea that something unpleasant might be taking place, and with all her natural kindness and tenderness, had come in hopes to neutralize it. Her appearance broke up the interview. The father and son shook hands; Mr. Lepel begging Frederick, "to think over what he had said to him."

When Frederick reached his bedroom to prepare for the ex-

cursion, he shut the door with violence, and burst into a roar of laughter. "Capital, by Jove! That was an idea of my father's, with a vengeance." He chuckled all the time he was dressing at the notion, and then, seizing a pocket-handkerchief, rushed downstairs to the party, who were waiting for him. "Good morning, Singleton, fine day; *en avant, marchons!*" And off they started on their pilgrimage.

It was one of those fine afternoons of dry, pure air, and fine-tempered sunlight, which we sometimes have in autumn, before that season departs finally to join "the years beyond the flood." The country was radiant with all the variety of colours which mark the period; and that country where our friends were is very beautiful. It undulates with hill and vale; it is dotted, here and there, with little Saxon churches, with ivy-clad towers, of a date long anterior, as we may be sure, to the town of Huskdale. The horizon is bounded by high, bare mountains, on whose summits the snow lingers all the year round; the dells have in them quarries, worked, exhausted, and abandoned long ago, and now full of trees and brushwood, from out which, in the moist twilight of the morning, young rabbits steal to crop the green barley of the fields near. No manufacturing town has a site so nearly poetic as Huskdale, or so few of the disagreeable characteristics of such cities. Yet, nowhere does there exist such a want of anything approaching to unanimity between the civic and rural inhabitants of the country.

Frederick and Farquhar marched on in front, talking about Oxford; Frederick, who had been educated principally abroad, and who belonged altogether to the progress party, attacking it as a bad place of instruction; Farquhar, on the contrary, defending it, which (when we reflect on what it had done for that youth) was, at least, disinterested. Next came Mr. Bones, with the enthusiasm of a pilgrim in his face, and in his right hand a considerable basket of refreshments. Lastly, came Augusta and Singleton; they were talking away as usual, in a manner at once playful and full of feeling.

"What do you suppose to be the exact nature of the pleasure we receive from seeing ruins? There is a pleasure, but yet it is sad too," said Singleton to his fair instructress.

"Dear me, Singleton," said Augusta, "what difficult questions you put. Why, I think it is, that we have a pleasure in doing honour to the dead, who once inhabited them; we feel that perhaps they are conscious of our kindness, and that it compensates for the decay."

"I am afraid that's rather far-fetched, Augusta," cried Frederick, whose quick ear had caught the remark, during a pause in his dialogue with Farquhar.

"Yes," said Singleton, "for it was fetched from heaven!"

"There's a true knight," cried Augusta, laughing at the hyperbole.

"Where is the guerdon?" said Singleton in a low voice.

Augusta smiled, and looked at him with a blush.

That was it!

"Neat," said Frederick, dropping behind, that the conversation might become general. "But I'll explain the pleasure you talk about. The pleasure of seeing ruins consists in this, that we mentally compare them with our own snug dwellings, and felicitate ourselves on the contrast."

"But if a man were houseless and homeless, he would feel the pleasure," said Bones.

"If so, it would be because he saw a chance of taking a shelter in the nook, there," replied Lepel.

"What do we live for, after all?" said Bones, with a sigh. (He began to find the basket heavy.)

"The greatest happiness of the greatest number," Lepel answered.

"And what is the greatest number?" asked Bones.

"No. 1!" cried Farquhar, briskly.

"Capital," cried Bones, and everybody laughed again.

"That will do for your next wine-party at Christ Church," Lepel said, smiling. Farquhar was charmed.

They were now drawing near the abbey, the ruins of which occupied a large space of ground, and were almost entirely covered with ivy. The stones were black with age, and nettles hung out of the ruined tower here and there. Stiff, black yew-trees sprang up, from out the piles of ruins, too, their cold, gloomy life suiting with the desolation round.

As the party approached, a heavy barn-owl was scared from his retreat, and with many a melancholy whoop, beating the air with his dull wings, made for a neighbouring wood. The daws clamoured with their harsh peevishness; and the starlings,—at once funereal and lively (like a group of drunken mutes), started out of their ivy home.

"This is poetry," said Singleton, uncovering himself for a moment.

"I feel it," said Augusta, softly.

"Sancte Kilderkine!" muttered Bones, invoking his favourite saint, in a low voice, "sit, precor, tibi, terra levis!—sit nomen honoratum! Ambulans, edens, bibens, sim tui memor." Bones was a solid, grave young man, who puzzled himself with the doctrines of a very clever set at Oriel, who first made him a proselyte, and then a laughing-stock.

"It is a relic of cold, barbarous times of darkness and fraud,

when a peasant was treated as a beast, and his lord was one," said Lepel, who, if he had no sentiment, had passion,—from his political feelings,—which was sometimes nearly as effective. Singleton and Augusta made no observation; they walked round the ruins together.

"All the divine feelings crowd upon one here," whispered Singleton, pressing her hand. She smiled kindly. Singleton looked at her face, but his eyes were scarcely dry.

"I love you as a sister," she said, quietly.

"I invoke you as a saint," said Singleton.

A quarter of an hour passed away, and then the party sat down on a group of stones, to partake of the delicate collation which they had brought. In pic-nics, everything ought to be as gay as the open air under which it is taken; the wine should reflect the heavens, for example. Leave bottled stout to ogres, oh reader! and honour the occasion with the ethereal sparkle of the transcendental moselle.

"There must have been something divine in the idea which prompted the builder of this abbey," said Bones.

"No doubt of it," said Augusta.

"I fancy it was built just as we build," said Frederick; "because they thought it useful, and that it would pay. All buildings are the same."

"What do you say to the Great Pyramid?" asked Singleton.

"I call it Cheops' Folly!" replied Lepel, emptying his glass.

There is no arguing against a *mot*, so the laugh which followed this stopped the discussion.

"What is that noise?" said Farquhar, suddenly.

There was heard, just as he spoke, the sharp, hard ringing of a horse's hoofs over the ground, and in an instant afterwards, there galloped up to them a young man in the uniform of a hussar officer. His horse, which was a small, beautiful black creature, as graceful as an antelope, bore the marks of hard riding, and its mouth sparkled with foam; the rider flung himself from his saddle within a few yards of them, and holding the bridle in one hand, with the other removed his cap and bowed low. He was very young, with long light hair, and a soft flaxen moustache, and seemed pale and harassed.

"I beg your pardon,—a thousand pardons," he said, faintly; "may I ask a glass of water?"

Lepel jumped to his feet at once. "God bless me,—there is no water. Let me entreat you to take some Moselle." And he seized a silver chased cup, which was lying unused on the grass, and filled it with the hissing wine.

"Thank you, thank you," said the young officer, and he

eagerly swallowed a draught of it. "You are very kind—" he looked round the circle, and spoke hurriedly and nervously. "I am going to Huskdale,—a detachment is ordered there; I have ridden fifteen miles in the last hour;—they say the country here's in a most disturbed state—riots expected every hour. Yesterday, a great meeting,—most inflammatory—too bad—poor people." He spoke these sentences in quick, broken fragments. Lepel looked at him hard; there was scorn gathering in his heart, and a sneer rising upon his lips.

"Pray rest yourself a minute."

The officer bowed again, and meeting Augusta's look, by accident, coloured slightly.

"I hate the duty," he proceeded; "all ours do,—but then, what times!"

"Yes," said Lepel, very calmly, "times indeed! So, Government are *afraid*, are they?" he asked, laying a slight emphasis on the last words.

"I fancy uneasy," replied the soldier, who with the quick tact which men of his profession acquire in such matters, saw to what class the party belonged. "There's always danger at these times in such places as this; it's as well you will have good protection."

With a half-smile at these last words, he rose, bowed, thanked them again, jumped into the saddle, and galloped away to the high-road, which lay near the field in which the ruins were situated.

"Well, let us return home," said Frederick, whose gaiety of manner had been quite driven away by the incident.

The party rose, somewhat damped also, and took the field-path towards Dunreddin. Augusta was silent, and Singleton did not like to risk the chance of producing any emotion by speaking to her.

"Come along, Farquhar," cried Frederick, motioning to him to take his arm; and as they walked away from the ruins, he pointed to the figure of the hussar, who was seen in the distance, disappearing like a small black cloud. "There goes a cub of war,—a brainless youth, who ought to be trundling a hoop, as he no doubt was six months ago."

Frederick had that dislike and contempt for soldiers which is another characteristic of the school to which his tendencies led him.

"He seemed very gentlemanly," said Augusta, quietly.

"Oh, of course, gentlemanly enough," he replied; "we are all gentlemanly, I suppose. I say he is a dull machine, used for a vile purpose."

He spoke bitterly, for he was always in earnest in his contempt,

—in whatever other matters he might be only an actor. His sister said nothing; they all walked on in silence, and in good time reached Dunreddin again. How calm and beautiful it looked as they approached;—to Augusta how holy—to her brother how tame!

Singleton's father was there, and going to stay dinner. So was Ellen Pierrepoint. Mr. Fontenoy was in a very bad humour; he had been all the morning trying poachers. He scarcely took any notice whatever of Frederick Lepel, which brought a glance to that youth's face which was not pleasant to see. He asked Singleton what he had been doing—as a matter of business—and yawned when he was informed; he said to Augusta that he hoped Singleton was not troublesome to her. He remarked that he did not think the fine weather would last long; that the Radicals of Huskdale were great rascals, but would soon be "put down" if they tried anything: that the country interest was shamefully used by all governments; that Huskdale was a disgrace to the country; that in his grandfather's time it was a wretched village, where they kept nothing but the county foxhounds; that the Chartist member wore a very bad hat; and that Mr. Rutter was an admirable preacher. In a word, Mr. Fontenoy was in force.

Frederick Lepel growled epigrams all the time they were at dinner. Mr. Fontenoy and he avoided commenting on each other. Ellen listened to Frederick with great admiration. Farquhar talked to Mrs. Lepel: Mr. Lepel talked to his daughter; and Bones opened on Singleton about the Romantic School: everybody talked to the wrong person, and everybody was uneasy.

After dinner, politics still kept hovering over the gentlemen's conversation, as it were; in the drawing-room, matters, however, began to grow better, when Augusta sang.

Now it happened that a little girl, a sister of Miss Pierrepoint, had come over to Dunreddin; and while all were in the drawing-room, this child, who had been on the terrace, came running in.

"Such a pitty sight—such a very pitty sky!" she said, after the manner of childhood.

"What does 'pitty' Eva say?" asked Augusta, moving away the pretty child's light hair from its forehead, and kissing it.

"So very pitty a sky!" cried the child again. "Come, see sky with Eva."

Augusta rose, and went out to see what made little Eva so enthusiastic; and most of the party followed. They gained the terrace.

And on the horizon, over Huskdale, the sky was flushing with a red glare.

"It is the aurora borealis," cried Augusta, hastily.

Behind her there was a low ringing laugh.

"Who was that?"

Nobody answered.

"That's no aurora borealis," said Mr. Fontenoy, brusquely, and startled.

"No heavenly fire at all," said Singleton.

"It's a fire at Huskdale!" cried his father. "Merciful God!"

At these words, there was a dead and deep silence among the party. The minds of all were full of the troubles of the period, and perhaps of their own relation to them; and they saw in the spectacle before them an object of more than ordinary terror.

Singleton stole near Augusta, and whispered to her some words to allay her fears. The silence lasted some time; then Mr. Lepel spoke:—

"Frederick."

There was no answer.

"Where is Frederick?"

Frederick was galloping to Huskdale as fast as a noble horse could carry him. Mr. Lepel learnt that he had gone. He turned slightly pale, and walked into the house; but he said nothing. The fire was slowly paling on the thick murky sky; only red, muddy clouds of smoke hung there, faintly visible.

There had been a riot—fortunately not a very serious one—in Huskdale; and it had been followed by the conflagration, which was now being extinguished.

The neighbourhood of the scene of action was crowded with people, plashing in the water which flowed down the street in a dirty torrent. There gleamed the helmets of the fire brigade, striving to save the burning dwelling, which was wrapped round in a funeral garment of smoke. Windows burst—rafters cracked—up rose the many-coloured flames, fantastic in their shapes, towards heaven—curling, leaping, quivering. Then came a great rush of water, and a hiss, and a thick cloud of steam.

Two mechanics were standing on the pavement near, looking silently on the spectacle, and glancing, first, at the faces of the crowd, which were lighted up by the fire, and then at each other.

Presently one of them nudged the other, and, rubbing his hands, said, "I'm blessed if it don't keep one warm—eh, Cowland?"

His companion laughed, and muttered—"Hush! So it does; and it's cheap, too."

And then they both laughed again. The fire at this instant burst another window, and shot out in a thin clear streak, like a golden branch.

A third mechanic came up to them, just as they were laughing. He was a tall, stout man, with a grave, pale countenance.

"Do you know," he said, "what the Bible says about the laughter o' fools?—That it's for all the world like thorns a-crackling under a pot! Let me tell you, my lads, that it *won't keep the pot boiling* either."

So saying, he passed on, and they saw him no more. Poor fellow! he was a mute, inglorious commentator.

The two mechanics looked at each other again, and then at the fire; the long hoses of the fire brigade were curling up the outside like serpents; the fire was getting gradually conquered. But the circumstance excited little emotion in that crowd, for the sympathies of the majority of them were with the Destroyer.

"It's getting low," said the mechanic, whom his companion had addressed as Cowland. Cowland's friend touched his arm meaningly as he spoke, for there had approached them while he did so two persons, whose appearance distinctively marked them as belonging to a different order. One was a tall, thin, military-looking man, with a large moustache; the other, a young one, wrapped in a cloak, and with a kind of foraging-cap pulled far over his brows.

"A *feu de joie Anglais*," said the tall one to his companion.

"A political suttee," answered the other.

"Ah, Paris is the town for mob movements. We deal with the very stones, like Deucalion—we turn them into men!"

"Hear that," whispered Cowland to his friend.

"If the people knew their own power!" pursued the first speaker.

Cowland addressed him.

"They are learning it, sir. We are to have a Convention soon."

His brother mechanic pulled him by the arm again, fearing perhaps that the strangers were spies.

By this time the crowd were beginning to disperse. The mechanics departed one way, the strangers another.

"I should like to visit the penetralia of these radical fellows," said the tall man. "They have secret societies here, too, as in Paris. You remember the "Vrais Amis' that I introduced you to?"

"Oh yes," said his young companion; "but hang it, one must be cautious; this is a different country."

"I'm afraid you're not a genuine democrat. Remember, 'none but the brave deserve the fair:' it's the same thing in politics."

"Yes, deserve the fair, all well and good. But who get what they deserve?"

"Come on; let us beat up the haunts of what they preposterously call the 'lower orders.'"

It was late the next morning before Frederick Lepel reached Dunreddin, and the servant who had been waiting up for him saw that he was weary and excited. He remained for some time, however, before he went to bed, resting with his hands clasping his forehead, and elbows on the table, in deep thought. Then he dipped into a book, and his eye fell on the passage which we have transferred to the head of this chapter, from the pages of the acute and profound historian of Rome,—that Rochefoucauld with a soul,—so keen, so deep, so earnest, so pathetic—immortal Tacitus! Melancholy and concise remark on civil commotions; *Spes et præmia in ambiguo: certa, funera et luctus!*

Lepel smiled, yawned wearily, began to undress. As he flung from his neck a heavy gold chain which he wore, "'Gad," he cried, "that's too pretentious for a friend of the people!"

CHAPTER VI.

O'er flower and fruit alike, Tom,
You pass with plodding feet,
* * * *
But Genius stops to loiter,
With all that it may meet. THACKERAY.

WHILE Frederick Lepel was thus employed in the stormy pursuits of the opening of his career, and, to use a very expressive phrase that they have in the navy, was "as busy as the devil in a gale of wind," that active gentleman, Mr. Fontenoy, of Heatherby, discovered a school for Singleton. Dr. Helot of Oaken Lodge, educated a limited number of young gentlemen of good family in the proper orthodox way which Mr. Fontenoy loved. The school was near one of those beautiful lakes where the shade of the divine Coleridge no doubt loves to linger. It was a good long journey from Huskdale.

"It had "turned out" several capital scholars. The Doctor was a clever man, and had once been ambitious. Possessed of considerable Greek, and some audacity, he edited Æschylus

The phenomenon made him a miracle in England. Flushed with success, he went to travel. He reached Germany. One morning he entered the lecture-room of a famous Hellenist, in a famous university. The subject was Æschylus and his recent editors. "Of editions of this great poet," said the Professor, "there is one well nigh to men of true learning intolerable; the edition of one Helot, an Englishman." The Doctor waited somewhile longer. He heard his unhappy edition pounded in the learned man's mortar: He rushed frantically out, and started for England that night. He became an under-master in a school on his return, and married his head-master's daughter, a lady as learned as Mrs. Carter, and as slovenly as Pope's Artemisia. He then took Oaken Lodge, which he conducted very successfully, and at the time that he wrote to say he was ready to receive our hero, he was tolerably advanced in life. His favorite instrument of correction was the cane. So far he conceded to modern ideas, which condemn the use of the birch. But he used the cane vigorously enough, and if, like Aaron's rod, it "swallowed up the rest" of the instruments of punishment, it combined all their terrors in itself.

A fine afternoon found Singleton walking along a romantic road which led from the town of Penguin to the Doctor's establishment. He had arrived at Penguin by the coach of the previous night. Next morning discovered to him that it was a beautiful country; so he left orders with the people of the inn to send on his luggage to the Lodge, and having obtained some general directions as to his route, set out to walk there. The air was keen, dry, and healthy. On the horizon towered fine blue mountains, marked with bright spots of snow. There was youth in his veins, and poetry in his heart, so he walked merrily along, occasionally soliloquising, as two classes do, the very happy and the very sad. And soliloquising, he flourished about him a stick, which had been presented to him by Frederick Lepel,—a good heavy one, for it had belonged to a satirical writer. To the motion of this he kept time occasionally, by repeating verses which he remembered, a practice which keeps up the spirits of some people, as jingling the loose cash in their pockets appears to do those of the middle classes.

After walking along in this mood for some time, and passing several of those roadside houses to which the villagers in the north come in winter time to drink ale with burnt oat-cake in it, Singleton arrived at a sharp turn in the road. Pausing here, before rounding the corner, to look at the country, he suddenly spied a book lying on the grass, near the hedge. It was lying face downwards, and had evidently been dropped by accident. He darted to it and picked it up. It

was a Virgil,—a very neat little edition. Here was a surprise. He scanned it carefully, and found on a blank leaf, the single word "Lalage."

"Lalage." What meant that prettiest of antique names, thus written in that sweetest of antique writers?

Singleton turned over the pages, laughing. Then he repeated "Lalage" again and again, making music in the lonely road, and chiming over, from Horace's delicious ode,

"Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem!"

There was a sound; he started, and saw before him—just turning the corner with quick step—a young girl of seventeen—with deep blue eyes and a complexion (to use a comparison of Propertius') "like rose-leaves swimming in pure milk."

"The gorgeous vision seemed
To sate the air with beauty,"

as Mr. Coventry Patmore says. She stopped short when she saw Singleton, glanced at the book which he held open, and seemed a little frightened. Singleton was not so shy now as before he saw Circe, and, besides, he had recently got hold of an idea that he did not observe his race sufficiently, and was determined to repair the neglect! So he took off his cap, and bowed.

"Were you looking for this book?"

"It is my book," said the girl, demurely.

"Lalage!" mused Singleton. "A pretty name!" saying which, he continued glancing from the book to the girl. "You must not think me impertinent;—but you who love the classics will know that temporary insanity follows from encountering a nymph."

She gave a little grave smile.

"Well, Lalage, here is your book. We are walking the same way."

They moved on together, and exchanged a few sentences more. Singleton loved girls of an intellectual turn. The fact is, that the affected hatred of "clever women" which we hear of so often, is usually the sentiment of Prigs and Sensualists—of whom it is well worthy.

"So you like Virgil, Lalage?"

"I do not know that I am a judge. It sometimes seems to me, when I consider his genius and his art, that his poem is like——"

"Like what, Lalage?" asked Singleton, stooping to pick up a chestnut, which he flung away, as a kind of distraction.

"The shield of Achilles carved in a cameo," said Lalage.

Singleton's blue eyes flashed upon her face with a gleam of interest.

"It is happy.—But as to Æneas; I confess I have no sympathy with him, eh, Lalage? he is too respectable."

"Have we any genius in the world now?" asked Lalage.

"You must look for them in the magazines," said Singleton, with a laugh.

Lalage sighed, "One could love a genius."

"Do you know, Lalage, I think you are a dreamer. I am something of a dreamer myself."

"Oh! you will waken; we do not wake."

Singleton was silent, and they walked on together. He was already impressed by this strange and beautiful creature. There is a kind of love which we experience only when we are very young—which has the purity of friendship and the aspiration of poetry—which is mystical, and has no gratification but of the soul—which passes from our being like a summer air from the sea's face—and which (this is the most melancholy characteristic of it) is seldom regretted.

Singleton gazed at her silently; their eyes met, and she blushed.

An elevation in the road revealed a valley, with a small, quick, clear river running through it, spanned by a wooden bridge. A group of cottages formed a little village on its banks; a rugged little church, with a flinty tower, and a roof whose red colour gleamed in the sun, was near. Half-way down the ascending road was the entrance of a lane, and at this Lalage stopped. Singleton felt his heart stopping too.

She held out her soft, white hand to bid him good-bye; Singleton was confused, and began to remember the directions for his journey which he had received at Penguin. "Then to the left," he muttered.

"Pray, Lalage, where is Oaken Lodge?"

"I am going to it," she said, motioning to the lane.

"And I am going to it," said Singleton, with the blood slowly mounting to his face. "'Tis Dr. Helot's."

"I am his daughter," said Lalage, colouring violently.

"And I, his pupil," answered Singleton. "Let us come in!"

CHAPTER VII.

The nonchalance of boys . . . is the healthy attitude of human nature.
EMERSON: *Essay on Self-Reliance.*

A TALL gentleman in black, portly and commanding, with a white neckcloth wrapped round his neck like a wisp of straw, received him. This was Dr. Helot. He was profoundly courteous to Singleton; for this was part of his system. The Doctor treated all his boys like "gentlemen," and caned them with dignity.

"You found Mr. Fontenoy looking for the gate, eh, Lalage?" he said.

"Yes, papa," said Lalage, hesitatingly.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Singleton," said the Doctor. "Walk in here, and I will introduce you to Mrs. Helot." Here he led the way to a parlour, in which a middle-aged lady in spectacles was sitting at a big book. Singleton observed that she used a snuff-box.

"My dear,—Mr. Singleton Fontenoy." Singleton bowed, and made some considerable impression. The fact is, that he had come to school a great deal too late for "moulding," as the process of warping youth is amusingly called. He had read a great deal too much, for the intellectual part of it; and as for the other, he had been always, for the last few years, brought into contact with people of the world. What a stride a man's mind makes, even by going to one or two parties! Singleton saw at a glance that Mrs. Helot was a worthy person, not quite *comme il faut*, and he could hardly help laughing, when, glancing to observe the Doctor, he thought what Mr. Frederick Lepel would have said of him,—Frederick, who did not condescend to quote a classic, except for the purpose of making a pun. Singleton sat down very coolly in the awful presence, talked away, when they opened a subject, and comported himself more like a guest than a pupil. Mrs. Helot soon displayed her learning, and he soon saw how Lalage had acquired her strange knowledge and ideas. Ah, Lalage was a sweet puzzle; so fair and so dreamy; so romantic and so innocent, simple, and cool. Poor Lalage! she was a genius, and she belonged at the same time to the Doctor's "Virgil class." Singleton stared next morning as she came in, stationed herself with unaffected simplicity and modesty in her place, and went on with the dull task.

Meanwhile, while Singleton was with the family, the rumour spread through the school that the "new boy" had come.

Oaken Lodge had two departments for its boys,—the school-room for the elder, and the boys' parlour for the younger.

Singleton was conducted in the evening into the "school-room," for which he was judged old enough. There he found a group of youngsters assembled round a fireplace, and cooking slices of raw potato upon fragments of broken plate. They were most of them gentlemanly fellows, but horribly rough. In one corner of the room stood a venerable pulpit, where the Doctor presided during the day; four huge, long desks, with iron rails, adorned the body of the apartment. The whitewashed walls were grotesquely adorned with figures, done in charcoal and with blacklead pencils. Singleton thought of Heatherby, and then of Dunreddin; then of Augusta, then of the George Inn, in Huskdale; then of Lalage, and reconciled himself to his fate. So, smiling (and like Pisistratus Caxton, he had a pleasant laugh), he moved up to the fireplace, and put himself into friendly relations with his schoolfellows. Jack Selwyn, than whom no boy in Oaken Lodge was cleverer or more caned, made room for him. On the other side was Harry Temple, a "dreadful" youth, who broke the knees of his father's horses during the holidays, and who made wanton allusions to Mrs. Helot, which turned the younger boys pale. These two governed public opinion in Oaken Lodge. They received Singleton very kindly, mentally agreed that he was a neat-looking fellow, thought that he was doosed old to come to school, and wondered whether he was a muff. They were conducting a dialogue when he came in, which the other fellows were listening to with respectful attention.

"I tell you she's forty," said Temple. "She came out in—18. I've a brother in the 110th (ah, you fellows should see him,—'gad he's too proud to speak to the governor), who told me so."

"It's Sapphini we were talking about," said Selwyn, turning to Fontenoy.

"Oh yes, she sang at a town near me," answered Singleton,—"Huskdale, not long ago. I met her at supper." The fact was, that Lepel had taken him there, one night, in company with a Parisian author, who was visiting our manufacturing districts, whom he knew.

Here was a hit! Singleton's reputation was established.

"You ain't joking?" said Selwyn, who had all the schoolboy's suspicion of anything that looked like an attempt to humbug him.

"No; why should I?" asked Singleton, innocently.

"By George, I shouldn't wonder if you knew how to smoke!" cried Temple, enthusiastically.

Singleton laughed, had tried a cigar, dared say it was a quiet amusement for a leisure hour.

"I thought so. I began with returns," said Temple, lowering his voice, as if he was afraid the Doctor would hear him. "I then got on to bird's-eye,—but Lord bless you, Selwyn, there, smokes shag, sir; he does, upon my word."

At this moment, some of the potatoes on the elegant cooking-apparatus gave signs that they were ready for consumption, and they were removed accordingly. Selwyn handed some to Singleton, who partook of them with considerable amusement.

"The worst of school is," remarked Temple, "that one can't get anything to drink. Old Helot gives us good enough dinners; I don't grumble at them, but we ought to have wine."

"I wonder whether they have sent my luggage from Penguin," said Singleton.

"Jack Roberts, go and see," said Selwyn to one of the boys, who flew instanter. He returned, carrying a brown parcel. The luggage had come, and this was part of it. They all crowded round, as Singleton proceeded to open it. There was a note, just on the surface. Singleton had not seen his things packed, so felt some curiosity to know what this was, and why it was there. It was in the handwriting of Frederick Lepel, and ran as follows:—

"Dear Singleton,

"I never was at school—thank God—or I should have been as ignorant as the mass of people. But I suppose it's like most places, requiring all the consolations of philosophy. Among these, the 'good things of the world,' as heavy people call them, must decidedly rank; so I have made you up a little parcel of them, for your private use. There, you dog! Don't ever say that the materialists are apt to be selfish, again! Good-bye. You have read too much. Open your eyes and look about you. I'm off to a blue-book. Yours,

"Frederick Lepel."

Singleton smiled as he perused this characteristic note, and then proceeded, amidst a general hum of expectation, to unpack the parcel. Off came one layer of brown paper. There was a pause. Off came another. The excitement grew intense. Off came a third, and disclosed two large brown bottles, a tin case, some little pots, and a paper of cigars. There was a burst of astonishment.

"Jack Roberts," cried Selwyn, "run and bolt the door." The boy bounded like a deer.

"What's the matter?" asked Singleton, seeing the movement, and the excited state of the little colony.

"Oh, by George, Fontenoy," said Selwyn, "you must be green. Do you suppose old Helot would stand that? He

thinks it's a cake you've got in the parcel. I can't fancy who the doose put these things up for you. My governor wouldn't. Catch him!"

"Well," said Singleton, coolly, "we will see what they are. Have you a corkscrew?"

This produced a laugh. No such thing was known in the schoolroom. "Well,—a knife?"

A knife was brought. He seized one of the bottles, held it in a slanting position, and decapitated it, as neatly as Louis XVI. This increased his popularity enormously. A grateful aroma came forth.

"Boys," cried Selwyn, with the impressiveness becoming the occasion, "if any of you says a word about what's done here this evening, I'll lick him. Remember, I'll keep my word."

Singleton laughed, and poured some of the liqueur into a mug, bearing the word "John" in gold letters, and handed it to Selwyn, who assumed the tone of a connoisseur, with an air that would have delighted Mr. T——.

"By George," said Selwyn, "it's a liqueur. Its Curaçoa!" He smacked his lips. "This refreshes a man, in this hole! It's good too." The little boys looked at each other with wonder, and one or two glanced at the door uneasily. "What would the boys' parlour fellows think if they knew it?" The novelty of all this amused Singleton exceedingly. He proceeded to administer small doses of the liqueur to the crowd.

"Does liqueur make people tipsy?" said Selwyn.

"Stuff," said Temple; "of course not."

"You had better hide these things in a safe place," said Selwyn.

Shortly afterwards, the time when it was necessary to go to bed arrived, and Singleton had to sleep in the same room with Selwyn and Temple. The illicit supplies were carefully concealed. Singleton thought his bed a miserable little crib. When he woke he missed the luxurious conveniences he had been accustomed to at home; but when we are young we can all be hardy if we like, however we may have been brought up.

"You must rough it out, old fellow," said Selwyn.

"Violets can grow anywhere," Singleton replied. The bell rung; they bounded downstairs. The Doctor had taken his place in the pulpit, and the day began as usual by the reading of prayers.

Then the Doctor proceeded to examine Singleton, that he might place him in a class. Singleton had come to school, as Gibbon says he went to Oxford, "with a stock of erudition that might puzzle a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy might be ashamed." The Doctor was somewhat sur-

prised, and a little puzzled, accordingly. Singleton would bungle at an irregular verb, that Selwyn knew in painful detail, but Singleton had read the disputes about the Homeric poems, and was very well acquainted with all sorts of theories. His peculiar education made him quite a phenomenon in Oaken Lodge. The Doctor placed him in the "Virgil class"—next Lalage. It was quite a picture to see the fair Lalage assuming her place in the morning, and going through the regular number of lines. None of the boys thought it anything remarkable; even Masters Selwyn and Temple, the leaders of the school, never alluded to her, except as in the "Virgil class." As yet, they were in that stage when females generally are rather a subject of peurile contempt than otherwise; and when precocity displays itself in an affection for the ruder vices, and a respect for jockeys and gamekeepers. As for the Doctor, who was pedantic in everything but what related to his dinner, he looked on his daughter as a most promising scholar, and probably thought it a pity that he could not send her to Oxford to take a degree.

The very first day, Singleton had an opportunity of seeing discipline enforced in the orthodox way. Selwyn had, with the liveliness which distinguished him, overset a desk, and with the impudence which sometimes accompanies liveliness, laughed at the Doctor's remonstrance. Dr. Helot descended from the pulpit, armed with his cane, approached Selwyn, buttoned up his coat, took a pinch of snuff to refresh himself, and then seizing the youth by the collar, commenced a hearty castigation. Singleton, who had never before witnessed the chastisement of anything but a pointer, felt a thrill of anger and degradation. Selwyn received the blows with Spartan indifference, and as soon as the Doctor's back was turned, winked to the boys near him, to their intense delight and amusement.

The "Virgil class" came up that afternoon, at their usual hour. Singleton looked over the book with Lalage. His translating pleased the Doctor. It was accurate enough, and then it was graphic sometimes, which cheered the old gentleman, who was glad of a change from the dry formal style of rendering which he was accustomed to hear, in his dreary *post-mortem* examinations of the text, day after day.

When school was over, the boys of Oaken Lodge had liberty to go wherever they pleased, for several hours, and Singleton availed himself of this to roam over that wild country, with its deep, bright, swift rivers, pregnant with the life of the North; and to wander by the banks of those broad lakes, worthy to reflect the blue skies—rivers and lakes which he did not afterwards forget—by the waters of the degenerate Scamander, or among the gardens of the land of the rising sun!

In a short time, he felt that the rude life at school was doing him good. He grew less dreamy; he grew stronger and healthier. Our training must be rough, if we would be fit for the work of the world, and contented with its daily life.

To dine with a relish at the *Syssitia*, we must first bathe in the Eurotas!

CHAPTER VIII.

But how this love came to be produced in me so early is a hard question!
COWLEY, *Essay on Myself.*

In a short time, the Doctor's experienced eye taught him that Master Singleton Fontenoy was gaining a great ascendancy over the other boys. Fortunately for all parties, the supplies sent him by his friend Lepel were consumed without any dangerous result. Selwyn was afflicted with a settled melancholy for a few days after their disappearance, but he recovered. Temple, having attained his favourite ambition, to be able to smoke "shag," had some thoughts of trying opium, which he believed a higher flight, but Singleton dissuaded him. Both these youths thought Singleton a capital fellow, and Selwyn made a point of ostentatiously walking with his arm round his neck directly after school was over. This gave Singleton fashion.

His influence was easily accounted for. First of all, there arrived one morning a copy of the "Huskdale Courier," with an account of the great meeting at which he had been present; and Singleton was astonished to find himself mentioned as "one of the gentlemen we observed on the platform." He showed this to Selwyn. Selwyn preserved his calmness as became the dignity of the Cock of the School, but was obviously deeply impressed by it. The paper was handed round; the boys were delighted with it. It was kept, however, carefully out of sight of the Doctor. The speech of the ambitious Frederick was reported at great length in the columns, and specially recommended to public perusal in a leader, which, curiously enough, bore some resemblance to the style of the speech itself—at least Singleton thought so. "Tremendous cheers" were put in at due intervals.

Singleton told Selwyn that this was the Frederick who had sent the supplies. Selwyn replied that it was just what might be expected from such a doosed clever fellow. Temple hoped he might never want a regalia. Both, however, agreed that it was a pity he stuck up for the snobs, under which name they comprehensively included all who were not "gentlemen's sons." Singleton was amused at their political zeal. He began to see

what advantage he had derived from his different culture. Brought up by themselves, boys will learn to think soonest. In fact, Singleton found he *learned* little or nothing at Oaken Lodge. The use of the place to him was more that of a gymnasium than of an academy. But it did him good; and most of all, by its bringing him in contact with these boys. He had no time to dream when he was at cricket.

In spite of the hate of learning which is all that at so many schools boys learn, they have a kind of respect for it. Singleton was liked for his proficiency in knowledge, perhaps as much as for anything else. He had a knack of writing (as they called it) which was found very serviceable in the production of themes; and of these, he sometimes turned out a dozen orthodox specimens—with an old quotation and all, complete—in the course of an evening. He crammed many of the fellows in their tasks, and in fact it soon began to be popularly believed that Singleton Fontenoy knew as much as the Doctor. This was a dangerous and deadly heresy. Then, Singleton had not yet been caned. Some of the boys started a notion that the Doctor was afraid to cane him. From that time his position was critical. One or two, who were jealous of him, shook their heads, and whispered knowingly, "Time would show," "Perhaps he'd stand a caning as well as anybody."

While this was a matter of speculation, an affair happened which seemed likely to bring it to a speedy decision. The Doctor's edition of Æschylus will be remembered. Well, at the time that celebrated work appeared (which was before Singleton's day), the "Pimlico Review" was in all its glory. The "Pimlico Review" had been started originally to support the Church (which it did in a most unchristian style), and to maintain the cause of aristocracy, which it did by employing the language of Billingsgate. Dr. Helot having, unhappily, a leaning towards Whiggism, the Pimlico Reviewers found out that he knew no Greek, and, in fact, massacred the work with the most unscrupulous ferocity.

One day, Frederick Lepel, hunting up old books at Dunreddin, in a leisure hour, dropped upon this number, and with his customary love of amusement, forwarded it to Singleton, at Oaken Lodge. The boys, who now learned for the first time that their preceptor had been an author, were charmed with the article. The Doctor was treated in it with a contempt which they of course thought exquisitely amusing. Selwyn perched himself, one afternoon, shortly after its arrival, upon a pump in the playground, and began reading it out aloud to an admiring audience.

"Listen here, my boys," cried Selwyn, who had been caned

that morning, and consequently was just in the humour for the performance :—

"'As to this man Helot's (listen to that!) remarks on the Ellipsis, they are quite on a par with the rest of the performance—fatiguing from their dulness, and offensive from their ignorance.'" (There was a great laugh at this, when suddenly a voice cried, "The Doctor! the Doctor!") "Now, my boys," Selwyn was going on, when the portly figure of Dr. Helot was observed coming up. He had divined from their gestures, that something which partook of the nature of mischief was going forward, and he held in his hand that cane which had so long preserved discipline in Oaken Lodge.

"What have we here?" he asked, approaching the pump. Selwyn jumped down, amidst the eager glances of the crowd of awestruck boys, and handed it to him. The Doctor, who was short-sighted, held up the book to look at it, close to his eyes. One little boy tittered—he could not help it. He was a comic writer in embryo!—The Doctor's eye caught him. He caned *him* as a preliminary. He then took a long look at the book,—shut it,—opened it again,—shut it—took a pinch of snuff. Perhaps that reminiscence of the olden time, in spite of its nature, suggested pleasant thoughts? Perhaps it brought to the old pedagogue's heart a tender recollection of the day when he first met Mrs. Helot, and the black past was perhaps lighted by that light?

At all events, he took the book down from his eyes, and held it in his hand by his side, very quietly, without any of the abrupt gestures of indignation which his pupils expected. They could not understand his feelings. But Singleton, with the quickness of sympathy of which I have spoken before, did, and felt a pang of compunction.

"Who gave you this?" said the Doctor to Selwyn, very quietly.

Singleton came forward to anticipate him. ("Now for it," thought some of the boys.) "I did, sir," he said, calmly.

The Doctor paused, as if in doubt. Singleton felt that he was perhaps more hurt than angry. So he added, "It was sent to me without my wish or knowledge." ("Ah, the sneak!" thought the jealous boys. Boys misunderstand one almost as much as men.)

The Doctor said, "I will retain it for the present," and walked away. The boys looked at each other.

"I say, old fellow," said Selwyn to Singleton, "he's only waiting for a chance, now, to give it to you!"

Singleton laughed and coloured.

"Will you stand it?" asked one of the boys.

Singleton saw, from the curiosity with which they all looked up at him, as the inquiry was made, that something was expected from him, out of the common way. Here was a dignified crisis!

It now became the engrossing question in Oaken Lodge—when Singleton Fontenoy would be caned? Was the Doctor afraid?

Meanwhile, Singleton stood next Lalage in the "Virgil class," as usual. They looked over the same book. How Singleton loved that dull task! Delightful contiguity! There was something in his affection for Lalage which he could not understand. It was different from the reverential, familiar kindness he felt towards Augusta Lepel. It had none of the heat which had transiently radiated through his moral atmosphere when the fair Circe crossed his orbit. Never had he attempted such a metaphysical problem as its explanation! It was spiritual more than ardent. It was a flirtation of the soul. He thought often of what she had said to him,—"we do not wake." These were pleasant mornings, when Singleton stood by her side, reading Virgil; and fancied that her breath was an air from the Elysian Fields of which the poet spoke.

One morning Singleton had committed some slight offence, and was ordered to learn by heart a hundred lines of Persius—a poet who, perhaps, has never been understood properly since he wrote, by anybody but Casaubon. (He has been edited often enough, to be sure, but that has nothing to do with it.) Singleton was summoned to repeat them. He would probably have been in a difficulty, when Lalage, gliding past the pulpit, dexterously fastened a piece of paper to it; Singleton saw that it contained several of the lines suggestively arranged; by cautiously glancing at them, now and then, he got through the task safely. Pleasant Lalage! Had her father become cognizant of this, the caning question would probably have been settled for ever. The worthy Doctor, perhaps, was scarcely conscious that his daughter was pretty, and in his care that she should be a scholar, had forgotten that she was a girl.

Now for a scene;—and the sequel.

In Oaken Lodge, there was a garden; in the garden, a shrubbery; in the shrubbery, a summer-house. In the summer-house, sat Lalage. It was a cold but sunny morning. She had a book in her hand, which she played with, occasionally, as if it were a fan.

The dead leaves on the gravel-walk fluttered. Singleton came in. They used to meet here, now and then—to prepare the lesson of the day. But the Doctor did not know this instance of their zeal.

"Good morning, Lalage. Let me wrap your shawl round you."

"Are you cold?"

"Not while I am with you."

"What will you do when you are away?" asked Lalage, simply. Singleton had never thought of that. All he knew was, that he had a feeling for her, something between friendship and his love of the Pleiades.

"I cannot think of that." Lalage broke into a laugh. Singleton thought of lilies.

"What are we reading, this morning?" he said with a smile.

"The same as usual," said Lalage, with a blush.

"I wonder what the Naiads were!" said Singleton, opening a topic.

"It's a curious subject," said Lalage, absently. They were advancing in their usual style! And there now occurred one of those fatal pauses, which used to embarrass them exceedingly.

"I have been speculating lately on the ancient mythology," said the erudite Singleton, looking at Lalage and colouring—though he could not understand why. "I do not believe in the theory which would have it that they deified the operations of nature—that, for example, corn became Ceres; or fountains, because they were beneficent, Nymphs. They deified themselves, I think. For example, Lalage, I think that some girl, like you, (excuse the illustration, for the sake of philosophy!) looked, one day, into a fountain, saw herself there, and, naturally enough, believed that it was a Naiad!"

"Do you, really?" said Lalage, with great simplicity. "Perhaps it was so." Lalage was the most delightful of pedants. She was very grave and very pretty. To adopt an appropriate illustration—she was an Elzevir edition of Minerva.

"Lalage," said Singleton, after a little, "you know what the *Sortes Virgilianæ* are, don't you? You dip into Virgil at random, and the first sentence your eye catches, has a prophetic reference to your destiny."

"The Persians have the same idea, and try it with Hafiz," said Lalage.

"Well, give me the Virgil, and we will try our fate," pursued Singleton, gently taking the book from her hand. Their fingers met, and they both blushed and laughed again.

At this moment the bell rang for school, but they neither of them heard it.

Singleton took the volume. "Don't do it!" said Lalage, turning a little pale.

"Pshaw, Lalage," he said, "are you so superstitious?" He looked at her. She had lost her colour a little, and how beau-

tiful her rich blue eyes looked in contrast with the delicate pallor of her cheek!

He took the book in his left hand. He opened it suddenly, and Lalage saw him blush and laugh again.

"What is it, Singleton?"

"Oh, nothing. What a stupid custom it is!" Lalage saw that he had popped upon these apt words in the 8th Eclogue:—

> . . . "Quid non speremus amantes?"
> What may not we lovers hope!

Singleton flung down the book on the seat and was silent. But Lalage coloured and looked grave.

"It was only fun," said Singleton, demurely, and fearing that she was a little shocked. But it was a more serious feeling that poor Lalage had! Suddenly, her eyes seemed to double in lustre, and Singleton saw a few bright tears on her cheek. At that sight an electric emotion affected him. His boyish playfulness was gone. He seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips, and he felt his heart throb as if it were growing.

. . . There was a noise of voices, a rattling on the gravel walk, a trampling and a hum! They started, and in an instant they saw from their summer-house—Dr. Helot, Mrs. Helot, the usher, a servant-maid, and a throng of eager, astonished boys approaching! It was a crisis. The Doctor arrived first, with his wondering train behind him.

He uttered no word. He quietly laid his hand on Singleton's shoulder and walked him away. The boys, in silent expectation, scarcely breathing in the intensity of their excitement, attended them. There was a faint cry behind, which Singleton knew to be Lalage's voice. At that sound he felt an emotion,—but it was not fear.

The party gained the schoolroom. The door was shut. The usher, a small, vulgar man, who had never liked Singleton, took his seat. Singleton felt a determined tranquillity. It was a moment of sublime emotion. Every nerve in his body was screwed up to a pitch of intensity of which he could not have believed his constitution capable. The eyes of all the boys were upon him, and they saw the dark pupils of his blue eyes dilate, and beam with a tranquil fire. Now was the time. His reputation in the school for ever, depended upon his conduct now.

The Doctor looked round the room, and placed Singleton in the middle of the floor. Then he took his cane from its well-known place, buttoned up his coat, took snuff, and drew a long breath.

"You have promoted insubordination in this school," said the

Doctor; "you have assumed a position incompatible with your place as a pupil; and you have dared to tamper with the feelings of my little girl Lalage."

"Your two first assertions are false, but let them pass. Your last is false, and I repudiate it with disgust and disdain," said Singleton, his shrill voice ringing through the room, in tones that made many a heart beat high.

The Doctor made a kind of rush towards him with his cane. Singleton sprung at it, snatched it, flung it through the window like a Parthian arrow. By a lucky chance, there was a heavy ruler near him: he seized it, and bounded on a desk. The boys near him made way. The Doctor advanced towards him.

"Stop!" cried Singleton; "if you dare disgrace me by your touch, I will lay you lifeless!"

The Doctor stood speechless for a moment. Then recovering himself, and drawing himself up, he said—

"You are mad. You can stay here no more: you are expelled!"

There was a movement of astonishment through the school.

"You may come down," said the Doctor, calmly; "I will not touch you."

Singleton gave a short, bitter laugh. He descended, and flung the ruler down.

"You must associate with these boys no more," pursued Dr. Helot. "Till you leave, you must stay elsewhere. Follow me."

Singleton followed him mechanically, for his passion was subsiding, and a cold, sickly feeling of disgust succeeding to it. They reached a room in another part of the building, a small, ill-furnished chamber, facing the back part of the house; and there he was left—alone, and locked in.

It was a dull apartment. He looked out of the window: his eye rested on a bleak paddock. The grass was short and scanty; the hedges were bare and ragged; the air was heavy and misty. Ever alive to external circumstances, and apt from his organization to be the slave of a cloud, or the lover of a rose, he was acutely affected by the melancholy picture. And the revulsion was coming upon him. He began to feel that dull *ground-swell* of the emotions, heavy, tedious, and sickly, that comes after a storm of passion: he gazed out of the window, feeling his hot brow chilled by the cold touch of the glass.

How the glorious fancies of his youth had been profaned by his anger! All the poetry he knew seemed to reproach him for such vulgar emotion. This was his first attempt at Action; and what a degradation!—A schoolboy's rebellion against a pedagogue's rod! "Oh brave!" And what of Lalage? The

thought was too much for him: he put his hands to his face and wept; he pined and sickened in his miserable little room.

We are surrounded, after all, by the elements of comedy: every Ophelia's grave has its gravedigger. Singleton looked round the room for a book; he found one. By a refinement of cruelty, unworthy of our age, the only book in that chamber was Dr. Helot's Æschylus! Singleton, as he picked it up, burst into a laugh. He looked into the Latin preface, which like compositions of the kind, was made up in a harlequin style, of patches of Latinity from the old authors.

While drearily perusing this, he heard something strike one of the panes of the window. He ran to it, and flung it up. Scarcely had he done so, when a stone flew past him, in, and fell upon the floor. He picked it up; it was wrapped round with white paper; he unrolled it, and read the following:—

"You're a brick! I always said so. Jonesby thought perhaps not: I said, certain. Old Helot's quite floored: *Pallidus irâ*, as the grammar says. We're carving it on the desks. Where will you stop at Penguin for the coach? *Somebody* wants to know. I am silent: real oak never *splits*. S."

In this brief effusion, he had no difficulty in recognising the genius of his friend Selwyn. The *somebody* must be Lalage. Come what might, he could not leave the county without seeing her again.

He recollected a pretty little inn in Penguin, called "The Nightingale's Nest," which, being of a fanciful nature, he had stopped at, solely because it was so named. He had a pencil in his pocket: he tore a blank leaf out of the Æschylus, wrote this name upon it, adding that he would *wait* there, and availed himself of the stone to throw it out of the window. By this time it was getting dark. He had no fancy for sitting there in the dark, during a winter's night; so he commenced a furious ringing at the bell, and rushed out of the door as soon as it was opened by the servant, who came to see what was the matter. Descending, he met the Doctor; and coolly telling him that he was going, and that he should send for his luggage in the morning, rushed out of the house. No effort was made to detain so desperate a character, and in a short time he found himself on the road to Penguin—that road where, not very many weeks before, he had met Lalage.

Selwyn stole out after him, and, running up, put his hand on his shoulder. Singleton was somewhat affected to see him, and shook hands with him heartily.

"Bravo, Fontenoy; you're a good fellow. By Jove, how you gave it him! But your governor won't lick you when you get home, will he?"

Singleton laughed at the bare idea of his dignified parent's condescending to anything of the sort. For, indeed, Mr. Fontenoy of Heatherby, though under certain circumstances he would have let a son starve, would have no more struck him than he would have voted to bring in a Whig for the county.

"No fear of that, Selwyn. I wish you would come with me: we should have capital fun."

Selwyn shook his head mournfully.

"That's no go, old boy, I'm afraid."

He was one of nine children of a strict old general officer on half-pay, younger son of an ancient and honourable but poor family, and was obliged to be very cautious and particular.

"Could you come on to Penguin, and be back in time for bed-time? He does not know you are with me?"

"Yes, I think so, if we make haste."

"Come along, then, and by Jove I'll send a cold goose back to the schoolroom fellows for a present!" cried Singleton, and away they ran. They ran with the utmost speed, and were nearly out of breath by the time they reached the inn, having accomplished the journey by alternate fits of walking and running violently.

Singleton ordered some dinner and wine, and then they began to talk about Lalage. Selwyn was quiet and sensible, and rather surprised Singleton by the tact and sense he showed in speaking on the matter. The truth is, he was one of those young gentlemen everywhere to be met with now-a-days, who take extraordinary pains, *not* to cultivate really promising abilities. I class the wasting of good talents among the decided phenomena of our day.

"Lalage would like to see you before you go, I dare say. It's quite natural, and I don't see how it's improper. The Doctor is angry just now, and unreasonable. If she did not see you, she would likely pine and mope; if she does, you bid her good-bye, and part with a fair understanding. Lalage's a good girl," said the youthful Selwyn, thoughtfully. "I don't understand her myself." He was silent, and Singleton thanked him.

Dinner was brought. Selwyn had dined, but attacked some wine, and went on talking, with many an anxious look at the clock. Time was jogging on. Selwyn's eyes twinkled pathetically, as he sipped his wine.

"I wish I was like you, old fellow. Somehow what I've learnt at old Helot's isn't the same use to me. Hang it, I should like to do some good—well, we shall see. I think I must be going," he said, for the tenth time; and then hesitating, blushing, and blundering, as the English always do when they are going to say a sincere and affectionate thing, he went on.

"I'm sorry to part with you, old boy. I always liked you from the first. The fact is, do you know—you're a little like a sister of mine in the face!" Singleton blushed, and laughed merrily. They got the cold roast goose, and wrapped him in ample folds of newspaper. Singleton made Selwyn take a parting glass of wine, accompanied him to the door, shook hands,—and away went his school friend.

He returned in a gloomy mood to the coffee-room. Two gentlemen (commercial gentlemen, that is) had stationed themselves before the fire, and drawn up their chairs to make themselves comfortable. Both had bushy and glossy whiskers; both wore showy trousers, with very wide stripes. They talked party politics, and discussed the corn laws fluently enough. They abused the landlords, and inveighed against rents. They sneered at the Church, and panegyrised the cotton trade. Each had read the "Corn Law Catechism," and had heard of Bentham. Each had a fluent tongue, and great hardihood of assertion; so that, for aught I know to the contrary, each may by this time be a "leader" of the people, and looking to a seat in the Cabinet.

They made room for Singleton with much politeness. He sat down by the fire, glad to get a chance of escaping from the tyranny of his thoughts.

"Things are very bad in the North, sir," said one of the travellers, civilly.

"I am afraid so," Singleton replied.

"And particularly in Rockshire (this was Singleton's county). Nothing but turnings out, stopped mills, and riots."

"Ah, the landowners there is a bad lot," said the other traveller. (Singleton winced slightly.) "I know the country well, from Bleartown to Huskdale."

"I have often thought it a pity that the aristocracy do not take more pains to assert their position and discharge its duties," said Singleton, thoughtfully.

"Oh, their day's gone by, gone by, sir," said the first speaker, shaking his head with a calm smile.

"Why gone by?" said Singleton. "I see no reason why it should be gone by, more than the day of the merchant or the lawyer. Their race is not degenerate any more than those of the other classes in the nation. They have great property, which cannot be taken from them, more than that of the cotton lords or the bankers. Their order is acquiring a perpetual accession of strength. What they want is an impulse from within."

"But the institution, sir?"

"What of it?" asked our hero, who was at that age when we sometimes get pugnacious in argument whether our heart be in the cause or not.

"Why—it had its origin in barbarous times."*

"As to that," said Singleton, quickly, and tossing off a thimbleful of sherry with the air of a large proprietor, "as to origin in barbarous times—so had religion, so had monarchy, so had filial affection, oratory, and law, and half the divine things the world possesses. The question is, what are barbarous times? Besides, aristocracy has changed its forms since then, and is adapting itself to new times; and the spirit of it being true, or profoundly natural (which is the same thing), a change in form is all that is necessary to it. Why, factories and their institutions had their origin in what you call civilized times, and pretty institutions they are!"

"To look at it in the abstract," began the traveller, with a corn-law-lecturer air.

"Why not in the concrete?" said Singleton, wickedly.

The traveller's face assumed a puzzled expression; but he recovered himself, and began a long harangue. Singleton's eyes were fixed on the fire. A strange feeling came over him. The red coals seemed swimming. Suddenly he fancied he saw Lalage in the room. A wondrous oblivion succeeded:—something touched him on the shoulder. He started up. The fire was low. A waiter was by his side. The travellers' chairs were empty!

"It's nearly twelve o'clock, sir. Your bedroom's quite ready."

Oh, Jupiter! Oh, Somnus! Oh, shameful want of breeding! Oh, gross dereliction of gentlemanly duty! The youth of my hero must be his excuse, for this breach of all politeness. He had fallen asleep in the middle of the traveller's harangue!

Three days passed, and Singleton was still in "The Nightingale's Nest." His luggage had arrived next morning, and no doubt Dr. Helot thought that he had long since departed for Huskdale, per coach. But Singleton, we see, still lingered. He could not go about much, for fear the Doctor should hear that he was in the neighbourhood. So he stayed in, read the newspapers, scribbled verses, wrote to his friend Fred Lepel, and looked at himself in the glass.

But "Nemesis favours genius," as Mr. Disraeli has it, and as any one may learn who chooses, as Juvenal says—

> . . . . . unum civem donare Sibyllæ†
> To add one reader to his "Sybil's" lot.

(a pun which is at the service of any diner-out of the higher class). On the fourth day, the landlady, a portly, and what is

* See Goodwin's book on Political Philosophy.

† Juvenal, Sat. iii. 3.

called a "motherly" female, that is to say, she was big enough to whip ten children efficiently, came to Singleton with a smile of mystery, and whispered that a young lady was asking for him. Singleton blushed fire, and stammered out a muttered request for some room to see her in.

"My own parlour has a fire in it," said the landlady, in a kindly tone, and led the way to a neat little room, where Singleton waited with the most intense anxiety and nervousness.

In came Lalage. What a smile, and how rosy she looked! The weather was very cold, but no frost could blight the roses in her cheek, any more than it could the violets in her eyes.

"How are you?" said Singleton, delighted; and she came up to the fire, and took her pretty white hands out of her muff, and warmed them there.

"Hush," said Lalage, "I have come to Penguin, on business for papa. He thinks you are away."

"This is very sad, Lalage," said Singleton, with a mournful air.

Lalage sat down, and pushed back her bonnet, so that her brown ringlets tumbled forward. She smiled a little, and Singleton long remembered the peculiar sweetness that played across her mouth. But it vanished immediately, and she spoke.

"I came, determined to preserve my calmness," she said, sadly, "but I cannot pretend that I am not very sorry we are to part."

"Thank you, Lalage. I wish I could express how miserable I am. I was right when I said we were both dreamers. We have wandered among the Elysian shades, and we are passing out of the ivory portal."

"Ah, we shall never discuss a lesson again!" said Lalage.

"I shall never forget what I have learned from you," said Singleton.

"The future is all dark," said Lalage.

"We are both young. You stand to me for all that is divine in nature. You are to me a religion. I shall turn towards you when I kneel to pray," said Singleton.

And so these young dreamers proceeded. Fools will think they were mad, but wise men will see that they were only unfortunate. For wise men dream, and fools only snore.

"Lalage, I love you with my soul. I plight you my faith. A little time and we shall meet again."

They joined hands.

An hour had passed. It was over, and Lalage was gone.

Singleton sat by himself and mused. He had nothing to detain him now in this part of the world, so he determined to go home, and accordingly took his place in that night's coach to Huskdale.

It was winter, and such a bitter winter as is only seen in these northern regions. The roads were almost paved with hard and glittering ice, and dark and wild they seemed to him as he was whirled along, save where the roaring fire of some blacksmith's forge cast a red glare upon the way.

The moon rose, sharp, clear, and of a pale gold. Singleton saw through the coach windows one of the most beautiful appearances of external nature—moonlight upon snow. Moonlight on the sea is rich, various, and brilliant; on the snow it has an appearance exquisitely delicate, but melancholy. It lights and tinges with a tender hue the cold masses which it cannot melt. Beautiful and ineffectual type of a higher heavenly light, that so often falls powerless on the world!

Singleton, whose only fellow-passenger inside was a benevolent and intellectual-looking old gentleman, a quaker of Kendal, slept during the night, miserably and restlessly. In the morning his companion, after the interchange of a few civil phrases, said smilingly—

"Thou thinkest much of the ancients, young friend?"

"I scarcely know," answered our hero, surprised; "why?"

"Thou didst frequently murmur 'Lalage' last night."

Singleton coloured, and muttered something about "dreams."

His eyes were dull and heavy. Poor boy! He had been crying in his sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

But thou,—what dost thou here,
In the old man's peaceful hall?
MACAULAY. *Prophecy of Capys.*

"FREDERICK," said Mrs. Lepel to her hopeful son, "could not you make it convenient to receive that deputation to-morrow in the kitchen?"

Now the patriot ought to have been, considering his position and professions generally, rather indignant at this proposal, but he had far too keen a relish for fun to be anything of the sort. So he jumped from the ottoman, where he was lounging with a book in his hand, and burst into a loud laugh. This laugh, indeed, was unusually hearty for Frederick, and proved by that fact alone that it was indulged at somebody's expense. For he

most enjoyed laughter, as Diogenes enjoyed wine, at the cost of others.

"Why, mamma, that would scarcely do, I am afraid. You are facetious this evening."

"Well, I tell you, Fred, the last deputation (so the servants say) was almost an irruption. The state of the parlour was something terrific. One member of the deputation, in pointing out the beauties of your grandmother, whose portrait (one of Gainsborough's best) is over the fireplace, touched it with the end of his stick. If she had lived to see that company there!"

"And," added Augusta, "my Views of the East, which unfortunately lay on the table open, bear the mark of some gigantic thumb." And she laughed, for Augusta, believing her brother quite earnest and honest in his political deeds, and being too sensible and too good to have any affectations which would interfere with what seemed right, bore no ill-will against the thumb in question, or its owner. Too good, I say, for it may be remarked that affectation as often comes from badness as from silliness of character; and thus, reader, when you see a very affected person, besides being pretty sure (which you no doubt will be) that he is a fool, you may also feel tolerably certain that he is a rogue. Whence or wherefore? Because mere vanity alone will not make a person affected. Affectation implies a disregard of the feelings of others, and very often a thorough design to hurt them.

Frederick had become almost a public character. His speech at the great meeting had gone through the empire. Newspapers commented on him; pamphleteers abused him. Although, of course, he could not expect to engage long the attention of the country, yet he made a far more intense impression on his own neighbourhood. In Huskdale, for example, he became a personage. The Radicals thought they had discovered a new leader. The liberality of his sentiments made him popular. He even began to mix secretly with some of the more dangerous democrats, who are to be found in England, as well as in other countries—Frenchmen who have invented pikes for resisting cavalry, and Polish refugees who have a project for blowing up Westminster Bridge, at a cost of ten and sixpence. There are many such strange characters to be met with by the philosophical, from enthusiasts who have arranged everything about the Provisional Government except how to establish it,—to calculators who propose to destroy the Oligarchy, by the agency of penny subscriptions. Now Frederick was only a Radical "Nor.-Nor.-West." In tendency, he certainly belonged to the "Manchester School," but primarily he was neither a Whig,

Tory, nor Radical, but a Frederick Lepel. He loved progress, but he also loved himself; and perhaps would have cared little for the march of intellect, if he thought there was no chance of his being at the head of it, or at least carrying a colour. Then he had a due regard for his family position into the bargain, and though very indifferent to ancestry, birth, and so on, and quite careless about the possession of these advantages in his associates, still it was the fact, that he came from a very good family. He could not help it. It was not his fault. But such was the fact, and people knew it.

In truth, perhaps, it may be said of this young gentleman, that, as some youths go to sea, not because nature at all destined them for sailors, but simply from a love of adventure, and a vague idea of doing something wonderful—so he embarked in agitation from a distaste for the regular hum-drum course of life. Since his return, he had seen quite enough of the young gentlemen in neat shooting-coats, who wandered about the country, with scarcely a question but "Do you hunt?" in their mouths, and scarcely an idea beyond it in their heads, to be quite sure that their society and occupations would not be sufficient for him. Then a great part of his youth, as we know, had been spent in travel, which had made him acquainted with remarkable men. His mind was powerful, and what is even more important, active. He had read and speculated a great deal.

The reader has doubtless set him down as without principle. But we must remember that now-a-days principle is a kind of ballast, like the ballast in a balloon, which must be thrown overboard if the traveller wishes to rise. It keeps you steady, but it keeps you down. Again, it must not be supposed that he had no good points. He was very good-natured, and (to use the balloon illustration again) if he had found it necessary to throw you out after the ballast, he would have delayed it to the last moment, and treated you with the utmost kindness till the fatal time. If he was capable of vices, he had no meanness, and that is something to say for him in these days. Finally, we must remember the age in which he was born, and the circumstances disadvantageous to education set forth in the motto prefixed to this part of my work. These act differently on different minds, and while some are made by them only unhappy, others are made mischievous.

"Well, Fred, you will keep your friends in order, then," said his mother, resuming the conversation.

Mr. Lepel, meanwhile, who had been snoozing on the sofa in a retired part of the room, woke up.

"Fred," he said, "have you thought over our conversation some time ago?"

"Yes," answered Frederick; "but the landed interest question must be deferred for the present."

His father looked at him rather hard and curiously. Frederick's face had a grave and serious expression.

"By the bye," continued Mr. Lepel, raising himself completely from his post-prandial nap, "By the bye, Fred, I was having a good deal of talk about you to-day. There was Mr. Fontenoy, Mr. Beaconsfield, old Mr. Pierrepoint, several other of the county people, and one Captain Slug from the —ths at Huskdale. They were talking about Rutter——"

"*Le pauvre homme!*" drawled Frederick with a sneer.

"Well," pursued his father, with as near an approach to a *dry* smile as a very amiable countenance would permit, "they began to speak of your political *début*. Regard for the people they all thought well enough; but they thought it a pity you should have taken such a decided Radical part, particularly"—here Mr. Lepel's words received a slight emphasis,—"as, had your wish to enter public life been known, Lord Clangour might have done something for you."

Frederick's face was visited by a slight evidence of emotion.

"And particularly," continued his father, watching him curiously still, "as the Chartists—a large section of the Radicals, as you know—look with great jealousy on such *coups* from such as you, and are said to be moving about it."

Here Frederick began to grow more and more anxious.

"And still more," his father went on, impressively, "since, at all events, the movement caused by the bad state of the country is virtually at an end. For I have it on the best authority, that everything will be put to rights immediately; that the leaders of the meditated risings are to be seized and tried; that, in a word, the thing's done."

Frederick jumped to his feet, with a start. "You might, I think, have told me this before. I wish you all good night!" And so saying, he left the drawing-room, and gained his own room. He presently, also, sent down word that he did not feel well; and next morning his indisposition appeared to exist still, for he was unable to see the deputation above mentioned, which consisted of some operatives wishing his aid to found a literary institute in Huskdale, in opposition to the existing establishments of the same kind.

Curiously enough, he recovered in the afternoon, and came downstairs. He then set off to Huskdale, and made several calls upon political friends, from most of whom he heard accounts quite confirmatory of what his father had said the night before. The truth is, that the "crisis" was taking a favourable turn; and after various "strikes," "riots," "turns-out," and

other phenomena of the saturnalia of labour, things were settling down into the old state once more, and the "difficulty" called "condition of England" was about to be postponed for another period of years.

Frederick, with his head full of disgust and disappointment, stepped out of a house in Mammon Street, where he had been having a long conversation with one of the Town Council, a violent Radical; and marched towards the office of the "Huskdale Courier," his apparent connection with which had so astonished his friends Singleton, Farquhar, &c. But before he got there (where, as we shall see, bad news awaited him), another disagreeable event happened. He was recognised by some groups of idlers, the chaotic elements of that extraordinary mass, a Huskdale mob, and violently hooted. The history of Huskdale, in a political point of view, is the history of mobs (as Bulwer Lytton says that of Paris is). Somebody is always being hooted there, and all cannot bear that operation with the equanimity of Mr. Rutter, secure as he is in the consciousness of innocence, and a living of £2,000 per annum.

It is a curious and certain fact, that of all classes of mankind, none despise the public so heartily as demagogues and actors, who have no existence except by its breath. Frederick felt an emotion of disgust hard to describe at this sign of his declining popularity, and walked on with a curse sticking in his throat, to which nothing but his usual hardihood of contempt prevented him from giving hearty utterance.

"'Gad," he muttered, as he gained another part of the town, "it is lucky I am no enthusiast, or this would sicken me pretty well! The '*aura popularis!*' Pshaw! It smells like a drain!"

With knit brow and iron sneer, he marched on towards the office of the "Huskdale Courier." We have mentioned that this was a leading Liberal print, but the truth is, that though, from long standing, it had a great name, its reputation of late had been its chief value. The rivalry of the "Ranter," whose democracy was of a darker hue, had damaged its sale. Frederick had with his usual energy, at the commencement of his career, purchased this journal for the sum of £500, which he could not ask his father for, but which he had paid in the form of two bills of £250, one at three months, and another at six. He had talents for business, but he had a love of daring for the sake of daring, which (and he was young yet, we must remember) had had a good deal to do with this speculation. He had written in it for a few numbers with considerable vigour and freshness, astonishing the steady old subscribers by theories which they could not understand, and quotations which they could not translate.

He reached the door. The office was empty. He went up to

the editorial room. It was bare! Startled and anxious, he ascended another pair of stairs, but was met by a body of men carrying the machine—the actual printing-machine—down, piece by piece!

"Why—what the devil's to do, here?" cried Lepel, angrily.

At the sound of his voice, a young fellow who had been long employed in the office, came running to him. He was a poor honest drudge, who had owed his bread to work in this place during several dynasties of editors. He was looking very frightened—

"Why, Tanner, what's the matter?" asked Lepel.

"Can't you see, sir? Oh! can't you see?" he said, seeming on the verge of crying.

"What is it?"

"It's an execootion, sir," cried the poor fellow. Now, though he lost his bread by this event, it is a fact that he felt for Lepel's loss, and perhaps pitied him the most.

The true state of the case was this. Lepel had bought the affair in utter ignorance of a previous *lien* on the property, the existence of which had been fraudulently concealed from him by the vendor! That enterprising trader having secured the bills, was speedily *non est inventus*. The mortgagee stepped in,—and *voilà tous!*

Some young men in Frederick's position would have raged and stormed—some would have been prostrated—some would have gone away and got drunk; and some would have become maudlin. Frederick was Frederick still. Three words taught him the whole affair. He gave the calmest business directions to the men; saw the house gutted tranquilly. His genius and his courage remained calm and triumphant, amidst the ruins of the first ambitious hopes of his youth. He saw how completely he was done,—saw the villany of it,—laughed at what was comic in it,—and changed his whole plans in a few moments' breathing time.

A quarter of an hour brought all the *employés* of the establishment round him. He seated himself on a small stool, which was left in one of the rooms, and very briefly addressed them. With pencil and a note-book, he glanced over some small unsettled accounts. He paid them at once.

"I now," he said in his usual brief, terse way, "wash my hands of journalism, and I wash them clean."

The *employés* went away, melancholy, and admiring his coolness. Lepel was left alone in the desolate house. He looked out of the windows, and saw the thick veils of smoke gloomily sailing over the town. "Curse the place!" he muttered. "I think I shall go to Paris again, for a month. A brave people

these, who dare do nothing against a government of fools, but bluster and lie!"

Then he execrated the rogue who had swindled him,—but of course never considered whether his own projects had been right, when tried by a moral standard.

He suddenly heard a step in the room, and turning round, he saw there a figure he knew. This was a short, melancholy-looking man, in shabby black, originally a mute by profession, but who, being cursed with a literary taste (than which nothing, by the way, can be more fatal to a small trader or labourer), had taken to writing. The former proprietors of the "Courier" had retained his services at the rate of a dinner and two glasses of brandy-and-water daily, to do the leading-article department. Lepel had degraded him to an inferior post, for he did not admire his style,—which, indeed, was tinged with the melancholy characteristic of his early avocations.

"What,—Mr. Lakker," said Lepel, briskly; "come to arrange the funeral of the 'Courier' eh?"

"You are facetious, sir," said Lakker, mournfully. "This is a sad business.—And just as I meditated sir, asking you for the loan of half a sovereign in advance—which is now, of course," said Mr. Lakker, looking at him, with a hesitating glance, "impossible."

Lepel smiled, determined to make the advance in question, but he mentally resolved to talk to Mr. Lakker for a little, first, as a matter of amusement and study. How much was kindness, how much wrong in this, the reader must decide for himself.

"I have certainly been nicely taken in, Mr. Lakker, but it can't be helped. Now, what shall you do, Mr. Lakker, if it's a fair question?"

Lakker, who had had some experience of life, saw that the half-sovereign was forthcoming, so went on in good spirits.

"I shall resume my proper department of literature, sir," he said, raising himself a little.

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes, sir—Epitaphs!"

"Epitaphs!—You surprise me."

"Yes, sir—epitaphs—the true 'sermons in stones,' Mr. Lepel! Who, sir, has ever wandered in our English churchyards, without perceiving the gross literary deficiencies of the surviving relatives of this realm! Not only is there an absence of that neatness of expression which distinguishes the high class of epitaphs, but there is, sir, almost constantly, a gross abundance of errors in sense and spelling. Is this decent? Is it respectful to the departed? Is it," said Mr. Lakker, becoming enthusi-

nastic, "worthy of an enlightened age? Shall we be careful in our newspapers, and negligent on our tombstones? Shall we teach our peasantry spelling, and bury them without it? Shall we be learned by the fireside, and illiterate at the grave?—Sir, I early perceived this rank abuse, and I exerted myself to rectify it! I put myself in communication with various statuaries, and engaged to supply—for a proper but moderate remuneration—proper inscriptions."

Lepel was charmed. "You deserve great credit, upon my honour, Mr. Lakker," he said; "but give me an example. Is it not difficult to deal with such a variety of persons as you must have to write epitaphs for, and, pardon me, are you not apt to repeat yourself?"

"Mankind is fallible," said Lakker, with a sigh. "Some people have thought so. Statuaries, sir, I am sorry to say, have made the observation!"

"Neatness of expression is rare, but very delightful in such compositions," said Lepel, suggestively.

"You may say so, sir." Here Mr. Lakker pulled out some papers from his pocket.—"For example, Mr. Lepel, Mary Boucher is a tradesman's daughter. I ask her character. I am told she was virtuous to an extraordinary degree. Do I state the plain fact? No. I write thus:

MARY BOUCHER.
WHOSE VIRTUES
DELIGHTED THE LIVES OF OTHERS,
AND ADORNED HER OWN.

"Neat, sir, eh?" said Mr. Lakker.

Frederick could have roared with laughter, "Capital, Mr. Lakker," he cried.

"It has its difficulties, sir, this employment, like others. Some people expect far too much for their money. Widows are outrageous sometimes."

"But if the deceased has been outrageously bad, Mr. Lakker?"

"There is the triumph of the art, sir.—Ah," exclaimed the epitaph writer, "if I could write 'em in Latin, sir! That would bring in money! So many people like to put an inscription over the defunct, that he could not have read if he had been alive!"

Lepel here looked at his watch, and saw that it was getting late, and he then gave Mr. Lakker a sovereign, saying that he might repay it any time—it was of no consequence; and so that gentleman seemed to think also, for he never, I believe, troubled himself on the subject afterwards

It was about five as Lepel sauntered away from the house, musing upon his position—upon the bills to be met—upon the sudden check, in short, that he had encountered, in the opening of his career. He began to think that his ambition must find some other way; but this was a matter for long reflection. Meanwhile, he was young! With brains, courage, and fortune, what need he care? Then it occurred to him that there was something glorious even in difficulties. Perhaps, also, he had too much neglected pleasure—a dangerous but delightful thought.

His carriage became more erect; his eye brightened; he clenched his hand and shook his arm as he walked along. Drawing near the George, he saw a knot of young fellows assembled there, at the entrance to the yard. They had been out hunting. One or two were in pink; their faces were ruddy with health; they talked away lightly and good-naturedly. They were smoking cigars, and discussing the run. "Would any of them change places with me?" thought Lepel, as he glanced at them. "Hang it, what's the good of brains if one cannot get oneself envied?"

Meanwhile, the group observed him approaching, "There's Fred Lepel," said one of them.

"Indeed," said a dark young man, eagerly. "That's him, is it?" and he raised his eye-glass.

"Very clever, isn't he?"

"I believe so."

"Oh, of course. Ah, how are you, Fred?" Here Lepel came up to them. He was apparently in capital spirits; he was pleasant and talkative; he inquired about the run. In short, he made himself as agreeable as possible.

"We have all been watching you lately," said the dark young man, with a slight bow.

"Oh," said Lepel, carelessly. "Too much honour. I've been having a run. Capital pace, but nothing caught. I am going to drop politics, I think."

The dark young man seemed more interested in this than one would have expected. He started a little, and looked curiously at Lepel.

"Have you heard that the 'Courier 's dead?" said Lepel, suddenly, for it had just occurred to him that he might as well set a proper story afloat on the subject before rumours began to go round. "It's defunct, sir. The proprietor has levanted. There's a screw loose, I believe."

"Why, we thought,—" began one of the young men, hesitatingly. Lepel saw the forming sentence, while it was yet in the womb of time.

"That I had something to do with it, eh? There are always

false rumours about; but never mind business. So you met at Gorse End, eh?"

The group now broke into two knots for a few moments. Lepel talked to Harry Pierrepoint, brother of the Ellen of whom mention has been made before.

Meanwhile one of the party said to the young man with the eye-glass, "Why do you bore yourself about his politics or projects, hang them?" For this was a youth who, not caring to cultivate his own talents, was jealous of those who did. "Tush, tush, my good Langley, you do not know the world yet," said his companion.

"My sister is over with Augusta," said Pierrepoint to Frederick.

"Oh, indeed; it's very kind of her. By the bye, who's that fellow? We were not introduced," whispered Lepel.

"Were you not? That's a cousin of Belden, Lord Clangour's son."

Lepel suppressed a "whew." It was awkward; for his recent proceedings must have appeared rather extraordinary to that family. He thought suddenly of the interest the youth had shown in what he said, and inwardly admired his tact.

Shortly afterwards he parted with these young gentlemen, and went home to dinner, where everybody thought him in very high spirits; so much so, that his father (who had of late been trying to study him) felt somewhat afraid that he had been playing some dangerous game, with dangerous success.

In the drawing-room he seated himself next Ellen Pierrepoint, and having asked his sister to play something, commenced a low, whispering dialogue. Ellen was bending over a beautiful volume of "Views of the East," full of gorgeous illustrations by an artist of great genius, and accompanied by some letterpress descriptions of the scenes by Higg, who, having gone up the Nile with a small carpet-bag, swaggered in print about his retinue, his luggage, his dragomen, &c., in a style worthy of the "Arabian Nights."

"My sister has brought me a beautiful album from London," said Ellen. "Will you write something for me? Langley has written me some beautiful lines, beginning—

'Go, lovely Rose!'"

"Indeed," said Frederick; "do you remember how they run?"

Ellen put on a pretty puzzled look, which wrinkled her little white forehead with lines as delicate as the veins of a rose. "Let me think.

"'Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me—
That now she knows—'"

Lepel laughed. "'Now she knows!' That's very good. What does she know? That the lines are Waller's." Frederick did not care for poetry (except satirical poetry), but he read it as a matter of culture.

"What, not his own?" asked Ellen.

"Not they. You need not tell him, but ask him carelessly if he has read Waller."

"For shame. But will you write something? I know you can write."

Frederick laughed. "I am afraid not in the album style, Ellen; but perhaps you would like an epigram, or an essay on politics?"

"Anything by you," said Ellen, softly, and dropping her eyes to the book. "Not bad," thought Lepel, who studied his friends as he would Rachel in Racine.

"I wish I could write poetry," said Frederick, with a very capital sigh.

"People must have great feeling," said Ellen, "to do so."

"People are often unappreciated," said Frederick.

Augusta stopped playing. Frederick looked round.

"I will get a poet for you," said Augusta. "Singleton Fontenoy shall write for you. He's at school now."

"Poor Singleton," said Lepel. "What a very nice fellow he is."

"He is indeed very agreeable; he has a good heart," said Augusta.

The carriage came for Miss Pierrepoint. She kissed her friend Augusta, and turned to shake hands with Frederick.

"I mean to do myself the honour of coming over to Pierrepoint to-morrow," he said.

Ellen looked very glad.

"Pray say so to Harry. Good night." And away went the damsel with Augusta.

"Some of the Pierrepoint girls have money," said Frederick to his sister, about an hour later, after a long fit of musing. "One of them had something left her by her grandmother."

"That was Ellen," said Augusta, quietly. "She is too good for you, Frederick." Frederick yawned.

Some weeks after this memorable day, the Huskdale coach from the west arrived at the Crown Inn in that town, about an hour before dusk. Down jumped the guard, and disencumbered his neck of an enormous shawl. The door was opened, and there came out a young gentleman. His cheeks flushed as he stepped into the chill air. He saw his luggage carried in, and walked away towards another inn, the George. Just as he ap-

proached, he saw a youth in a scarlet coat dismounting from a horse. He thought he recognised the figure. The rider walked into the inn, as he drew near. The ostler was holding the horse. Though it had been a hunting day, the animal seemed in marvellously good condition.

"Mr. Fontenoy," said the ostler, touching his hat, as the young stranger arrived. Then looking towards the inn knowingly, to be sure that the rider did not hear him, he pointed to the horse with a knowing jerk of his thumb and a leer, and said, "now that's what I call bringing in an 'orse in good condition."

Singleton (for it was that youth) laughed, and turned to enter the hostelry. The doors opened with a swing, just as he reached the portal; and who should appear in pink, neat cords, and unexceptionable tops, but—Frederick Lepel!

"Hillo, Singleton, bravo—yoicks!" cried he; "here's a metamorphosis."

Singleton laughed long and loud.

"Pity me, my friend. The gods have vowed vengeance against me, and changed me into a beast. But come in, and wait till I throw off these rascally habiliments. 'Gad, old boy, I'm afraid it won't be the first time I have turned my coat." Before long, they were rattling away to Dunreddin.

"Were not you astonished?" said Lepel. "Ah, I have a good deal to explain. But you have a good deal to tell me. I got your note from Penguin. Come to our place now."

"But, my father——"

"Pooh! I think he dines with us to-day. Better meet him there, and before people, than in a *tête-à-tête*. Nothing is so horrible as that."

This seemed sensible enough, so away they went to Dunreddin, where, sure enough, Fontenoy *père* was in the drawing-room.

While Singleton was attiring himself upstairs, Lepel ran down before him and said, "Papa, I have brought a friend home to dinner. He's upstairs." The party evinced some curiosity.

"Who is he, Fred?" asked his mother.

Mr. Fontenoy looked up, as if he thought it a great liberty. But Fred could do as he pleased—anything in reason, and sometimes a great deal more.

"A very gentlemanly fellow," said Frederick, smiling. "A youth of very good family, clever, and good looking. I'm sure you will think him good looking, Augusta."

"You are joking with us," said Augusta.

The door opened, and in came Singleton. What a surprise! Singleton was embarrassed, but not ungracefully so. He

blushed, and bowed, and smiled, and then walked straight up to his father, and held out his hand, and said, "How are you, papa?" Mr. Fontenoy shook hands with him, with an air of great coolness. Singleton thought he had heard nothing about the Oaken Lodge affair, but he was mistaken. Dr. Helot had written a particular account of it.

In the course of dinner his father said, "Well, Singleton, where is Mrs. Fontenoy?"

"Sir!" said Singleton, colouring in an instant.

"I thought we were to have a Lalage somebody—no matter."

Singleton was struck dumb. Augusta was astonished. Mr. Fontenoy's object was gained. Confusion, curiosity, and doubt, were scattered like seeds into the breasts of the circle. Frederick, indeed—nothing could disturb. But Mr. Fontenoy's son and heir looked as if he had found poison in his wine.

CHAPTER X.

. . . Now he's ta'en anither shore,
An' ower the sea. BURNS.

I HAVE designedly left it to the reader to learn by implication that our hero, Singleton, had no mother, for who knows not how much more agreeable is the knowledge which comes gradually, unperceived and unsought, than that which is formally communicated, or laboriously acquired? I preferred that this fact should be deduced from what was written of his wayward boyhood.

The truth is, that Singleton's mother had been long dead. No one seemed to have known her in the county in which he was brought up. His father never alluded to her, and Singleton shrank from the subject in consequence. Not that he dreaded anything except recalling to him the painful memory of his loss. But this was sufficient restraint to a delicate nature; so Singleton had, up to the time of which I am writing, cherished a natural curiosity, but cherished it in secret. He now began to hope that that curiosity would receive its gratification. No one of a thoughtful nature, but must love to know everything of the beings from whom he has sprung. Nay, without affecting ancestral pride, who would not wish to know whether his fair ancestors loved music—if their eyes were blue, or if they flirted?—without encouraging prejudices, who would not be proud to think that his progenitors read Shakspeare, and perhaps dined with Fielding? Now-a-days, when so many people are preju-

diced against prejudices, let us at least respect even prejudices that are associated with sentiment or poetry. Perhaps, it will be found that a gentleman who is

Too proud to care from whence he came,

will be apt to be too proud to care where he goes!

At all events, Singleton began to grow very curious about his family. He took pleasure in wandering in a gallery where there was a goodly row of De Fontenoys: for I must state, by the bye, that De Fontenoy was originally the family name, and so remained till the time of the French revolution, when Roger De Fontenoy, who was a strong Whig, and a friend of Fox's—who affected an elegant sans-culottism—and owed money to Brookes—dropped the "De" as a barbarous relic. It was not without hesitation that Singleton's father, a strong Tory, suffered this Roger to remain in the gallery, but he dared not dispense with the genealogical link, so contented himself with remarking that that gentleman had obviously been of unsound mind.

Singleton early observed that he himself bore little family likeness to these distinguished gentlemen; and this made him more and more curious about his maternal ancestry. A gush of tenderness followed his indulgence of a vein of sentiment; and he came down one morning, determined to speak to his father on the subject. His father was already out. Singleton was perhaps somewhat relieved, as well as disappointed, for he dreaded the interview a little. In fact, he expected from him little sympathy with sentiment, for Mr. Fontenoy rarely showed that he was subject to any strong emotion but anger.

Finding that he was left alone in the mansion, Singleton went to wander in the gallery. There, as he was once again gazing at the oval faces and brown eyes of the Fontenoys—characteristics of their Norman origin—he heard a step behind him. Turning round, he saw Mrs. Campbell, the housekeeper, a tall, stately, ladylike personage of mature years, whose face was one of the earliest which he remembered. She had been in the establishment ever since his infancy, and sometimes, during Mr. Fontenoy's excursions to London or the continent, had been a kind of foster-mother to Singleton.

"Good morning, Master Singleton," she said, smiling benignantly, to our hero. "Your papa is going to attend sessions, sir. The trouble he has to go through, poor gentleman, is something awful."

Singleton smiled; and, continuing to gaze at Lionel Fontenoy, a cavalier, said, "Ah! these were the men, Mrs. Campbell!"

'Yes, indeed, and well you may say it. If they had all been

as brave as him, we would not have had a red-nosed rebel ruling the country," said Mrs. Campbell, who had a great contempt for the memory of Oliver Cromwell.

And here I take the liberty to observe that the poor lady was not more ignorant than many people in very different positions in life, of the real character and history of that great man.

Singleton looked round him, and sighed. The housekeeper had thought, lately, that he was looking melancholy, and like others, she could not understand how a person could be melancholy who had fine clothes and lived well.

"I am sorry to see you gloomy, Master Singleton," she said, kindly.

Singleton assumed a smile, and then it occurred to him that he would sound Mrs. Campbell on the matter which was nearest his thoughts, and of which she must, he fancied, have some knowledge. So he put on a gay air, and pointing again to the portraits, said, "Now, *I'm* not much like any of these goodly gentlemen, eh, Mrs. Campbell?"

She did not perceive his drift, so she said at once, "Why, I don't think the likeness is that way, sir."

"Do you remember my mother?" said Singleton, looking her straight in the face, and striving to conceal his embarrassment.

Mrs. Campbell paused, coughed, and answered slowly, "I have seen her, sir;" and then, as if she had suddenly remembered something, she said, "but I must go to——"

"Stop!" said Singleton, seizing her by the wrist, by a sudden impulse, and growing very hot.

"La, how you frighten me!" cried the housekeeper.

"Mrs. Campbell," cried Singleton, with an affectionate look, "you have known me long, and you have been kind to me when I was very young. I want to know all about my mother. My father is away; I don't care to speak to him about it, but tell me all you know. Where was it?—what was she like?"

And Singleton kissed her hand affectionately, and so warmly, that I dare say it made her feel young again; she actually blushed as coquettishly as the great Elizabeth at sixty.

"I'll show you something, if you will promise not to tell your father nor anybody," said she, lowering her voice.

"Oh, I swear——"

"Never mind swearing. I never believe that men are in earnest if they swear!"

Here she dived into the recesses of her imposing black silk gown, for a large bunch of keys.

"Promise faithfully you will never tell. Your father would never forgive me, Master Singleton."

"I do promise, most faithfully."

"Then follow me."

She left the gallery, followed by Singleton, who was all eagerness and anticipation. On they went, from room to room, through long passages and up mysterious stairs, for Heatherby was a very spacious old place, and had been built and patched in every variety of style. They had no adventure, unless we may so name the encountering a maiden of Mrs. Campbell's, with a pretty face and feet, who, without the smallest reason, made a point of blushing and looking confused whenever she met Singleton.—Which was a great shame!

At last, they reached a small room at the very top of the house. Mrs. Campbell entered and Singleton after her. It was quite dark. While Singleton stood bewildered, the housekeeper removed a shutter. In rushed the light like a triumphant conqueror. It peopled the room with little motes wavering in the sunbeams. And full in Singleton's eyes there appeared a portrait.

Ah! that face—so beautiful and so young—with heavenly eyes of heaven's own colour—with soft masses of dark hair, and a mouth that seemed redolent of roses, tinged too, in spite of its fairness and its youth, with a melancholy as delicate as the shade of a young cypress—that face was the face of Singleton's mother!

"Who was that, sir?" asked Mrs. Campbell.

Singleton's eyes filled with tears. "I know her,—I know her," he cried. "Sweet mother, pray for me!" And he gazed upon the face with rapture.

"Oh, for shame!" cried Mrs. Campbell, shocked at what she sincerely believed to be an impiety; for it is extraordinary with what pains our "reforming" churchmen have rooted out all the natural feelings that create and beautify devotion.

Singleton turned his moist eyes to her. "Do tell me all you know, Mrs. Campbell. I will remember the kindness, indeed I will!"

Mrs. Campbell was touched, but she was frightened. "Indeed, dear Master Singleton, I know very little. Your mamma died very young, not long after you was born. Your papa keeps everything silent about her. There was something wrong, I believe."

"What!" cried Singleton, turning pale as death.

"Oh, dear, I don't mean that, sir," cried the housekeeper. "God forbid. I mean the match was some way objectionable."

Here she appeared very much frightened, and perhaps secretly regretted that she had ever brought him to this chamber.

He stood motionless for a little. A calm feeling of reverence succeeded his emotion, and then seeing that it was impossible, and doubting whether it was just, to draw anything more from her on the subject, he thanked her, kissed his hand with a chivalrous religion to the picture, and fled to his bedroom. Mrs. Campbell, meanwhile, shut up the window again, locked the room carefully, and then departed to her own apartment, where she recruited her nerves, after this trial, with a large wine-glass of Madeira.

Singleton had been shut up by himself for some time, and had just bathed his face and refreshed himself with some perfumes, when he received a message, saying that his father wanted to speak to him. With some trepidation he descended. His father was not alone; there was with him a tall, fine old gentleman, with a fair face, very bold in its expression. He was seated on a chair opposite Mr. Fontenoy, and leaning forward to speak to him on a large heavy cane with a gold head.

"This is my boy," said his father.

"Ah, my lad, how are you?" said the stranger, jumping up to shake hands, and dropping down again very suddenly. "Do you know who I am, eh?"

"No, sir," said Singleton.

"Why, your grand-uncle, to be sure, Sir John Singleton, K.B., Admiral of the White! Did you never hear of your grandmother, Miss Singleton? By G——, you ought to have, for she brought rhino into the family." And here the veteran made a lunge with the portentous cane at Singleton, who burst out laughing. Mr. Fontenoy looked very serious, but was obviously rather frightened of his naval relation.

"He's a fine lad. Come here, my boy, and lay your arm on the table!" Singleton obeyed. The admiral raised his arm on the elbow, joined his fingers with Singleton's, and made him struggle who should press the other's arm down. Singleton was defeated, but made a good resistance.

"Ah, a wiry young rascal. Well, what do you know? Know Latin and Greek, eh?"

"Yes," answered Singleton.

"Well, you know a d——d deal more than I do, that's all then," said Sir John, with a roar. "But don't you learn to swear. I can't help it sometimes, but it's very wrong, and I was brought up in the old service."

"You were going to suggest something to my son?" said Mr. Fontenoy, quietly.

"Going to suggest? I was going to ask him whether he wouldn't like to go to sea? They say that there's going to be a war soon. And I think so, for, by Jupiter Jovis, the French won't rest till they get cursed well licked.

"Thundering and roaring—
Thundering and roaring—
Thundering and roaring—
Guns!"

"Well, Singleton, what do you say?" asked Mr. Fontenoy. "You complain of want of action, and you won't hunt, and you won't shoot or fish. Will you go to sea?"

"Action!" cried the admiral, misunderstanding the youth's meaning,—but scarcely more than his father did, by the bye,—"You'll get actions enough, if there's a war; and I tell you there's one brewing in the Mediterranean at this moment."

"Well, I'll think of it till the morning," said my hero, somewhat taken by surprise.

"Ah, that's sensible," said the admiral; "and now, Fontenoy, let us have dinner."

At dinner, the admiral performed in a manner worthy of his reputation, for he was a dashing and gallant officer. After dinner, he filled up his glass, and saying, solemnly, "The Queen!" pronounced the claret worthy of the toast.

"Now, you would not think I had a wooden leg, would you, my boy, from my walk?" he asked Singleton.

"Certainly not," said Singleton, with surprise. Sir John jumped up from his chair, and began walking about the room in a most imposing manner. "Yet it's a jury leg: cork, my boy! And by—whew," he cried, whistling away the rising oath, "I have drawn enough corks in my life to keep me in legs till I want them no longer!" And down he sat again.

Mr. Fontenoy began two or three subjects—corn, country, gentlemen, and the poor-rates; but Sir John did not appear to have a relish for any of them. "How do you think I lost my leg? I was midshipman of the 'Magnifico.' We fell foul of the French ship 'Harpagon,' got to windward of her, shot away her fore-topmast. Well, just as I was going on a message from our captain, to the fellow who commanded the main-deck quarters,—bang came a thirty-two pounder, and takes off my leg! It was left hanging just by a bit of gristle, and as they carried me below, the leg went bump, bump," (the admiral took a sip of claret at each exclamation) "at every step of the hatchway ladder!"

Singleton's genuine shudder was taken by the *raconteur* as a high compliment.

"That was a wound, eh? They gave me some brandy, and dressed the stump. I got a pension, and I got a cork leg. And here I am, you see, as sound as ever, and I shall fly my red bunting at the main before I die."

"Shall you go to sea again, uncle?" asked Singleton.

'I don't know, my boy," said the old man, rather moodily. "But I hear that old Pannikin, a captain of 1818, is to commission the 'Patagonian,' 80, soon, for the Mediterranean; and he shall apply for you, if you like.—But help yourself to wine, my boy. 'Gad, you won't always get claret, or else the service is cursedly altered. By the bye, I invented a bottle once."

"Invented a bottle!" said Mr. Fontenoy.

"Yes; I was with a very dull set of fellows who would not pass the wine, and I invented a bottle *with a round bottom* that would not stand! So, you see, they were forced to keep it moving."

"Till they could not stand themselves, eh, uncle?" said Singleton, facetiously.

"Ha! ha! yes, just so," said the admiral.

"Singleton, ring for coffee," said Mr. Fontenoy, gravely. And so, with anecdotes, and Sir John's good nature and droll characteristics, the evening passed off pleasantly enough; and it was not till after accompanying his uncle to his chamber, and then retiring to his own, that our hero began again to think of the tender and touching topics of the morning. How his mother's sweet face haunted him! The thought became a vision, and he saw her in his dreams. Then he fancied she came close to him, and kissed his brow, and said—"Follow your destiny, son, and you shall hear of me in the South!" Singleton awoke suddenly. He could have sworn he heard a voice. But all was still, and he fell asleep again.

In the morning he rose early. He went to Mrs. Campbell and begged her to let him see the portrait once more, before his father rose. With reluctance, she took him again to the room, and this time he noticed, what he had not observed before, that from his mother's neck there hung a cross. It might be a mere ornament; it might be a sacred symbol. And where did that symbol gain its divinity? In the South?

"Why should I not go to sea?" said Singleton, in soliloquy. "The sea has been thought to be the great fountain of being, the *fons omnium viventium*, the mother of all life! From the sublime speculations of Thales, to the magnificent hymn of Byron, it has been the object of the wonder of the sage, and the admiration of the poet! From the sea rose Venus—in the sea

perished Sappho? It has been described by Æschylus, and it was the birthplace of Undine! It received the life-blood of Nelson, and the last sigh of Shelley! Everything great and wonderful and beautiful is associated with its name. Cæsar struggled with its currents, and saved from its waters the proudest trophy of his genius. Cicero flew to it for refuge, a few hours before he met his fate from the assassins. It was the bride of Venice, and the nurse of England.—Enough; I will go!"—

"I will go, uncle," he said, at breakfast.

"So you shall, my sucking Nelson," replied his uncle. "Your appointment shall be here in a fortnight, for Pannikin will hoist his pendant soon, and he has a right to enter one youngster; and he's under great obligations to me. I like decision—so gallop over to Huskdale, and tell your tailor to give you your measures on a slip of paper. I will take them to London with me, and hand them over to a crack outfitter. When you come up to town, call upon me in Bolton Street, and I'll give you a feed."

"I'm exceedingly obliged and grateful."

"Well, prove your gratitude by ringing the bell for me." And in a short time afterwards the distinguished old officer was on his road to London, and my hero's fingers were tingling with the vigour of his parting shake.

Sir John Singleton was an officer of the old school, and the proper old school. He was not one of those vulgar persons who crept into the service during the war, and who, with none but the qualities that are equally found in the common sailors, prided themselves upon their contempt for refinement, and thought that they were Benbows, because they were barbarians. Not one of those spitting and swearing gentry, who turned the lower decks of their ships into brothels, and the upper into flogging shambles; who, with vulgar manners deemed it fine to persecute officers of higher culture, and at least equal merit. Sir John had all their daring, but had qualities, also, worthy of his ancient and honourable family; he was brave, but he was courteous and courtly. To be sure, great culture was inconsistent with his career, and a slight roughness betrayed that he had been accustomed to rough work. But he was a gentleman, and a man of honour. He had an energy that shrank from nothing; he might have been a valuable adjutant to Blake, and it was not his fault that he did not die with Nelson,—for no man fought more bravely at Trafalgar, and he had lost his leg in battle some years before that bloody fight. So let us wish him a pleasant journey to town.

We are now to consider Singleton as preparing to leave home,—a remarkable period, divided between sentiment and common-

place,—portmanteaus and plighted troth,—tin cases and tears,—a time when we shirk from going, and would not stay for the world. Often he resolved to speak to his father on the mysterious question which haunted him, but his courage always failed at the point, and whenever he screwed it up to the mark, something spoiled the opportunity. Then he was engaged in attending to innumerable invitations from friends desirous to pay him attention before his departure. Ellen Pierrepoint was anxious to see him with the little dagger on, which forms part of a "youngster's" uniform. Augusta was weaving into some white cambric handkerchiefs the Fontenoy crest, in red silk, for his special use, he being "barbarous" enough, though he lived in an "enlightened" manufacturing county, to feel some interest in the heraldic emblems of his family! Tomkins despises these things, and ridicules a "cross fichée." Does Tomkins know that the *fichée* means that the Crusader had his cross sharpened at one end, that he might fix it in the earth and kneel before it to pray to God 'ere he went to sleep? Let the poor fellow try and picture *that!*

In a week or two there arrived, as the admiral had said there would, a big letter addressed to Mr. Singleton Charles Fontenoy, which we subjoin:—

"Sir,

"I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that you have been appointed as Volunteer of the First Class to H. M. S. 'Patagonian,' fitting out at Sheerness, and you are hereby commanded to report yourself on board the guard ship at that port to be examined.

"Your obedient servant,

"Alfred de Sluggy."

Upon the receipt of this document (the signing of which was the only work that the aristocratic De Sluggy had done that week for his money), Singleton was rather frightened. The phrase "examined" suggested all the terrors of Mr. Trochee over again, and he actually went to the library and read hard for a whole afternoon. He then thought that, as he was going into the Navy, he would look up some naval novels, and he sent over accordly to the Circulating Library at Huskdale for an unlimited supply.

Back they came,—"Cheeks, the Marine," in three vols.; "Roger McGuffin, the Boatswain;" "A Story of the Sea;" &c., &c. Singleton, whose reading, as far as modern fiction went, had lain in a different school, was somewhat startled by these productions, and began to think that if they were true pictures of naval life, he would have some extraordinary persons

to associate with. But it was too late; though different, indeed, was the style of these books from that of "Zanoni,"—or thy creations, father of "Contarini Fleming"—thou who, amongst satirists, art God of the Silver Bow!

Singleton resolved that he would have separate interviews with those whom he loved. Thus parting is made more tender, but less embarrassing and sad; and he resolved to defer to the last an interview with his father.

He went, one morning near the fatal day, to Dunreidin. Augusta was by herself in the boudoir. Singleton opened the door softly, and went in. There she was, as usual, reading poetry, and looking poetry.

"Good morning, Augusta."

Augusta looked up and smiled, and motioned to him to sit down. They might almost have been called brother and sister, so like were they in nature,—in enthusiasm, in fancy, in goodness and gentleness—in what is called "organization," but which yet we feel must be higher than organization, though we cannot define it. Now, how different was Singleton from his father, and Augusta from her brother Frederick! These are mysteries of nature not sufficiently considered.

"I go soon, Augusta," said Singleton, softly; "and I must bid my sister good-bye."

"You are not going now," said Augusta, suddenly.

"Not this minute," said Singleton, smiling; "but I wish to have a little farewell chat. I will write to you from the Mediterranean, and tell you how I like the 'warm south.'"

"Think of me when you are in Athens," said Augusta, smiling. "I need not tell you who else to think of."

Singleton turned pale. "Ah, poor Lalage. I wish she had a sister. Who ever had a sister such as you have been to me? You have been the lamp my soul has seen by!"

He rose, and went to look out of the window. The spring was coming. But there was a shade on Augusta's brow, and she sighed.

"I must have a long talk with Fred before I go," said Singleton.

"Ah, do you know, I fear Fred, Singleton. I am convinced that his ambition is quite unscrupulous. I am quite afraid he will bring us into some danger if it is at all necessary to his plans."

"Oh, he is certainly bold and indifferent, but he has a good heart, I think."

Augusta looked melancholy, and shook her head. They sat down, and had a long conversation, and then Singleton went next to her brother Frederick's rooms. He found that great patriot (whose democracy, by the way, was now assuming the

milder form and title of "Philosophical Radicalism"), but whose proceedings were variable and somewhat inconsistent just at present,—employed with his meerschaum, with his back to the fire. He was gazing philosophically upon a table strewed with books and papers, and had quite the air of an embryo minister.

"Ah, King," he cried; "I'm glad to see you. Time of departure drawing near? This is very terrific!"

"We must try and bear up," said Singleton, laughing.

"Just so. Put on a weed."

"Thank you. I don't care about smoking just now."

"Going to sea, my boy," pursued Lepel. "Now, do you know, Singleton, I am not suspicious (Singleton saw that some monstrous suspicion was forthcoming), but I think I see your father's drift in wishing you off. It's my opinion—I may be wrong—(which meant, I feel sure I am right)—but it's my opinion—thinks of marrying again!"

Singleton gave a genuine start, and was indeed very seriously astonished. Lepel glanced at him, and puffed vigorously at the meerschaum.

"He is quite young enough—particularly with the Heatherby property in his possession (here Lepel sneered), for most young ladies of this day. However, I think you will find that he'll marry, and it remains for you to consider how far your interests will be affected by it."

Singleton continued to listen with great curiosity, and was still too much surprised to speak.

"My dear boy," resumed the speaker, paternally, "you have no talents for worldly matters. For *practical* purposes, the most useless of all vehicles is a balloon! although it soars so high!—Of course I know your intellectual powers (Singleton blushed!) but they are not of a practical character, and if you do not take care, it will be your lot in life to be duped by men with not half your talents. Such is often the case with literary men."—

Here I pause to remark the curious fact, that neither Lepel nor Singleton thought that this observation was applicable to their own case, and present conversation.—

"Now, I don't think you and your father have much in common."—

It suddenly flashed upon Singleton to speak to Lepel about his mother. But he checked himself, and resolved not to do so. Yet the subject hovered in his mind, and influenced him through the rest of the interview.

"He does not understand you; and you best know whether perfect confidence has subsisted between you."—(This remark sank deep into Singleton's mind.)—"However, my boy, put

your interests in my hands, while you are away. Let *me* look out for you."

"Who could my father have in view to marry, think you?" asked Singleton, passing over, *pro tem.*, the last words.

"Nay—that's hard to say. What would you think of—Augusta?"

Singleton was thunderstruck.

"Not that it's at all likely, that, my boy," pursued his friend, coolly; "for she is to marry the eldest Belden, heir to the Clangour Earl."

"How so?" asked Singleton, quite overwhelmed, and driven backwards and forwards by every new stroke of Frederick's.

"I see it on the cards," continued Lepel. "I have seen that he really likes her—and that's everything, let me tell you, after all. I see him married to her, and the influence of that family secured for me. It is no such a great honour, although great luck,—for my family have been gentlemen for seven hundred years, and how many of the families in the Peerage can say that! I see myself in public life, backed by the prejudices of others, and courage of my own,—governing fools, and outmanœuvring rogues,—the successful schemer under an old system, and perhaps the hero of a new one." His eyes flashed fire as he spoke, and he stretched out his hand, as though he would grasp the future that he saw before him in a grip of iron.

Singleton felt his blood grow warm, and then he turned to Lepel, and spoke tranquilly.

"Well!—I wish you, as Johnson said to Burke, all the success that an honest man can." (Lepel laughed; he was as cool again as ever.) "I go to the land of dreams—quieter dreams than these. Speak again about what you were saying of my father."

Lepel did speak, and the dialogue lasted a long time, and when it concluded, it was with an implied understanding that Lepel should act for Singleton, during his absence, according to his discretion.

Then Frederick totally changed the subject, and pointed out to him several volumes of orations that lay upon the table. "There are two arts," he said, "more than any others, necessary to the youth of our age."

"And what are they?"

"Oratory, and the use of arms! Let us go down to dinner, and drink the healths of Cicero, Angelo, and Mr. Nock!"

Frederick was exceedingly lively all dinner time, and you never would have imagined for an instant that he was all the time mentally occupied in speculating on post-obits as a means of raising money to pay bills.

Time passed on. There was a grand ball at Heatherby, to celebrate Singleton's appointment. Next morning he was to depart. He had resolved to speak to his father on the great subject that very morning; but, strange to say, Mr. Fontenoy had gone "unavoidably" out, but had left a most affectionate note to his son, containing the final good-bye. Was it indifference or tenderness, thought Singleton, that had prompted this!

He knew not. It was enveloped in the mystery which surrounded so much for him. Once he thought of delaying his departure at all risks, awaiting his father's return, and pressing the inquiry; but, for this, he had not courage. Speaking to Frederick on the subject was profanation; and as for speaking to others, he was prevented by a petty species of fear, which sometimes haunts all of us,—the fear of being thought "sentimental."

He was accompanied to Huskdale, to the coach, by Frederick and various youths of the county of their acquaintance. A start, and he was off! Of the thousands who have felt the sensations of such a moment was there ever one who could describe them? Here we see the divinity of the soul as much as in anything,—that it declines interpretation and analysis,—that it is a King who will accept no words as its slaves. Here, as in every inquiry, we find ourselves stopped by mystery,—mystery, whereof the recognition and contemplation is as beneficial to the mind as darkness is relieving to the eye. "Let us be silent, that we may hear the whisper of the gods."*

When the coach reached its first halting-place, the guard came to the window.

"Which of you gentlemen is Mr. Fontenoy?"

"I am," replied Singleton.

"I was told to give you this when we came here, sir."

It was a kind of little note, and in the handwriting of the housekeeper, Mrs. Campbell. It contained but one line:—

"They used to live at St. Albans."

CHAPTER XI.

Ah pity! The lily is withered, the purple of the violet turned into paleness.
JEREMY TAYLOR. *Contemplations on the State of Man.*

The dead how sacred! Sacred is the dust
Of this heaven-laboured form, erect, divine!
YOUNG. *Night-Thoughts.*

RAISED on a slight eminence among the fair and fertile plains

* Emerson.

of Hertfordshire, the town of St. Albans has a site worthy of its associations. Roman genius and Saxon Christianity have left their witnesses there. The idealist who has visited the most touching cities in the world may find a fresh pleasure of the soul in that little town. And what variety! The mind moves over ages at a stride. From memories of Tacitus to memories of Cromwell. Here died St. Alban; there sleeps Bacon. Do you want a more modern—nay, a comic association? Here Hogarth met poor wayward old Lord Lovat (that twopenny Highland Marius), as he was on his way to London, to lay his gray head on the block.

And then the abbey! Vast, grand, and simple, it looks rather as if it had been hewn out of rock, than built. An air of very sublime and severe simplicity attends it. It breathes as it were the cold air of the North; and suggests that it was the work of men, who learning to bow to Jesus, could not entirely forget Odin and Thor. Its characteristic is a sublime utility, more than beauty or splendour. You would pronounce it a structure created from a deep feeling of the necessity of religion—the child of the people's devotion, more than the priest's pride. Utilitarianism was divine then, and this was the form it took. Upon the whole, I hold the building of this Abbey rather a strange freak for a "barbarous" people in a "dark" age, and difficult to acccount for, when we consider that there was no member for the borough,—town council,—or county paper,—in existence! The St. Albans people have become civilised now, and turn their "vote and influence" to a more "practical" account! Oh, that horrible word!

It was a fine morning in Spring, and the grey towers of the Abbey looked bright in the sun, and greener seemed the grass in the churchyard of St. X——. In that spacious resting-place there was a man digging a new grave. He was a tall, melancholy, middle-aged man of sour aspect. He had his coat off, that he might work more freely. His arms were red with the exercise, and every now and then large drops of perspiration fell from him and mixed with the heaps of earth; for he was working very hard—you might almost say "with a will," in the cause of the coming tenant; in a word, you would have taken him for a legatee! But in truth, he was only the parish sexton, and worked professionally. He had dug the graves for several of his own kin with that same spade—a task which sounds terrible enough, but which to him as a sexton, seemed no more so than murder to an Austrian general, who has put down a free people!

Whether it be that gravedigging is not so much of a sinecure as of old, I know not; but I have remarked that gravediggers

do not sing now at their toil. Our friend was quite silent excepting a grunt occasionally, and stuck constantly to his work; when he heard a step near, and looking up, saw a young gentleman approaching the grave, whose light step, sunny face, and bright eye, contrasted very strikingly with the place. The youth, though not in mourning, was dressed in very dark clothes: so possibly the sexton thought he might have some business in his way. He looked up, and touching his hat, said, "A fine morning, sir!"

"Very fine, indeed," said the youth, quietly.

"It's a little chilly, sir, but my work keeps me warm."

"A very large burial-ground this is," the youth continued, looking round.

"Yes, sir. This ain't the best part of it, here where we are. It's best on the north side. There's some fine dry lying ground there, sir!"

"Some fine monuments I see, too," and the youth moved on in the direction of which the man spoke.

There is a beautiful and affecting story told of poor Chatterton. Not long before the close of his melancholy career he was wandering in this way in the churchyard of St. Pancras, in a sublime reverie of poetry, when he stumbled and fell into a new-made grave! His companion, as he assisted him to get out, congratulated him playfully on the "resurrection of genius." The poet smiled mournfully and shook his head, but from what he said, it was clear that he thought the accident prophetic. And not long afterwards he drank of the fatal cup, and added one more name to the list of martyrs.

This story hovered in the memory of Fontenoy as he strolled away from the new-made grave. He had come to St. Albans in consequence of the note which I mentioned in the last chapter. He had but one day to spare before proceeding to Sheerness, and had devoted it to this visit. And now, what could he learn when he was here? The case seemed hopeless. Yet it was something to see the sunlight streaming on the Abbey windows, to know too that Romans had once been on that same ground; and that perhaps on that very spot some joyous young Tribunus had quoted Horace to his comrade, and dipped into the Falernian or Massican, long, long ago.

He was musing thus very absently, scarcely seeing the gravestones before him, and almost stumbling every now and then in the long grass, when suddenly his own name flashed upon his eyes! He started, like one awakened from sleep, and with keen attention, and a heart beginning to beat, he stood at the foot of the grave and read the words Ivy Fontenoy. Why did he start so? He might have known that his mother was likely to have

been buried here—but this sudden discovery!—It seemed as if he had just lost her by death—now when he had first known her resting-place.

He was very sad and lonely there, among this crowd of graves—this mob of monuments. There is something sadder than death in a country churchyard. It is not only that the form you loved is lying there,—and that the ugly heap of earth which it displaced is basking in the sun instead of the form which added to that sun's glory. But then, how wretched were the lives of the poor drudges to whom the churchyard is a kind of second union! And oh, their memorials! Sorrow mingles itself with a degradation which seems to discolour its tears.

Singleton stood there in silence. Why is it that all emotion has come to be classed as "theatrical?" Is it, that in our age, deep feeling is only seen on the stage, and that we look for nothing elevated or touching except in the mimic life?

But a new surprise came to him—a soft and beautiful surprise. Neglect as cold as the bones of the dead or the hearts of the survivors, had left the other graves bare. But on *her* grave, there was a bunch of fresh violets—the first of the spring!

Whose pious hand had offered these fair gifts? Some one, doubtless, who had known and loved her, lived near—and to Singleton, as he turned away full of this thought—the sunlight on the town seemed brighter, and the fields round more fair.

He moved away with a lighter heart. The gravedigger had gone. The wind was rising from the northward, and a slow solemn cloud sailing towards the south seemed to beckon Fontenoy to follow to the sea.

BOOK II.

THE SEEKER.

CHAPTER I.

"There was a ship," quoth he.
THE ANCIENT MARINER.

Men are placed in command of ships still, who were educated under the old system * * * and find themselves as much out of their element as Rip Van Winkle, in Washington Irving's charming story, when he descended from the mountain with his long beard. SKETCHES IN ULTRA-MARINE.

H.M.S. "Patagonian" was built as a three-decker, at a cost of £120,000,—when it was discovered that she could not sail. She was then cut down into a frigate at a cost of £50,000, when it was found out that she would not tack. She was next built up into a two-decker, at the cost of another £50,000,—and then it was discovered that she could be made useful—so the Admiralty kept her unemployed for ten years!

The "Patagonian," like some Lords of the Admiralty, was no ways remarkable for her head. But she had a wonderful round stern. She was rather sluggish in working, and altogether was among ships a kind of naval hippopotamus. You might get five knots out of her, on a bowline, in a very stiff breeze, and I believe she once went nine-and-a-half, with a gale of wind on the quarter. In a heavy sea-way she rolls steadily, like an old boatswain who has had a glass too much. She has tolerable accommodations inside, and upon the whole, is more ridiculous than positively objectionable.

When it had been decided to commission the "Patagonian," after she had lain for the above-mentioned ten years in the Medway, the next question was—who should be the happy man to command her? A Kent borough became vacant; there was an election: one Pannikin, a captain on half-pay, who had voted for twenty years with the pinks, suddenly voted with the blues. Two of his tradesmen did the same, and the fortune of the day was turned. Now, what was the exact degree of moral guilt incurred by Pannikin, by this apostacy? Let us be charitable. It could not be much, for as the veteran was incapable of forming an opinion on politics at all, it was scarcely a sacrifice of principle

in the proper sense of the words. Be that as it may, it was a sensible move. Not long afterwards, Captain Pannikin was appointed to the command of the "Patagonian."

Pannikin was one of those who "came in through the hawse-holes," as the old naval phrase says,—that is, he entered the service as a common seaman. He began his career as a boy, and in that capacity was appointed servant to a lieutenant, who was a man of very great family by his father's side,—for history, which delights to puzzle the investigator, is quite silent on the subject of his maternal origin. This lieutenant was not without those tastes—to which he may be said to have owed his existence—which distinguished his illustrious father, and his boy Pannikin, I believe, with that intuitive sagacity which is a great deal more profitable in a worldly point of view to a young man than any amount of literary genius, knew how to serve his master without neglecting himself. But, *quid multa?* He secured his master's patronage, and when the ship was paid off, was appointed to another, as midshipman. He had a good deal of stolid physical pluck, and in the days of hot war this was of great service to him. Trafalgar found him a junior mate, and left him an acting lieutenant, for the ship which he was in, having a fool for a commander, exposed herself, about one o'clock in the afternoon, to be "raked" by the whole broadside of the "Santissima Trinidada."

On this one occasion, prudence was of more service to Pannikin than pluck. When a ship is in danger of being raked, it is customary to make the men lie down at their quarters, but etiquette requires the officers to remain standing. Now, I suppose Pannikin was afraid that if so brave a man as himself continued to stand, his men would be ashamed to lie down; so, no sooner was it seen from the bow-ports of the lower deck that the huge form of the Spanish three-decker was crossing them at right-angles, within a hundred yards, than Mr. Pannikin, who belonged to the foremost lower-deck quarters, gave the word to lie down, —and set the example!

The broadside came; there was a thunder and a crash. Deadly had that shower been; several officers were killed by it. "He who humbleth himself shall be exalted," was verified in Pannikin's case; he rose up; the shot had cleared the way for his promotion, and he was promoted accordingly. It was on this occasion that Sir John Singleton secured his first claim to Pannikin's gratitude. Sir John commanded the after lower-deck quarters of the same ship. A word from him would have fatally damaged the rising man; but Sir John was considerate as well as brave, and maintained a compassionate silence. Indeed, a bloody battle was just the thing to put that brave man into a

good humour, and he stamped about the lower-deck on the cork-leg, which, as I have said, he even then wore, as merrily as possible.

After Trafalgar, Pannikin served under my favourite, the brave, good, gentle, and accomplished Collingwood, that Bayard of the sea, whose graceful letters would have done honour to a man who had never done anything in his life but write. He was made a captain in 1818, and from that time to the year in which the "Patagonian" was commissioned, this gallant officer never saw the sea. With his prize-money and half-pay, he established himself in a farm in Kent, where he cultivated his laurels, and what he could better appreciate, his cabbages. He became a regular farmer; he married the daughter of one, and had a family, numerous and promising, almost as that of Priam; indeed, so countrified had he become, that the big official letter, containing the appointment which rewarded his apostacy in the Potborough election, found him in top-boots, beating up a hedge for a hare, with a second-hand single-barrelled Manton and a brown spaniel.

It was a fine spring morning, about three weeks after he had hoisted his pendant, and Captain Pannikin was with his family steaming down the Medway to Sheerness. The captain stood near the man at the wheel, with a nautical air; his wife was near him, and Miss Jemima, a fine, chubby young lady, of the Dutch tulip style, with a parasol as big as a dandy's umbrella, was gazing on her papa with admiration. The gallant officer, though in plain clothes, looked very imposing.

Presently a heavy coal-barge was seen sailing up ahead of them, with a strong breeze. It had a huge black sail spread, and so may be said to have been *nigro simillima cygno*, as the Latin grammar has it. As it swayed to and fro, there seemed a chance of a collision with the steamer.

"Starboard, damme, starboard," cried Pannikin to the man at the wheel. The passengers looked at him with astonishment.

"You ain't allowed to talk to the man at the wheel, sir," cried the skipper, from the paddle-box.

"I'm a captain in the navy, sir," cried Pannikin.

"That's nuffing to us. Port, Bill." Just then the coal-barge yawed. The steamer grazed her. There was a volley of damns from her. The passengers shouted, and Miss Jemima started with the shock, and flung herself forward into the arms of a young gentleman in a blue monkey-jacket and a glazed cap, who came rushing up from the cabin to see what was the matter.

"You cursed lubbers," roared Pannikin to the crew of the steamer; "you ought to be well flogged."

"Never mind him, Bill," said the imperturbable skipper;

"steady." So saying, the skipper shook his fist at the man in the coal-barge, who returned him a graceful salute of a satirical character, with his fingers and nose.

"Too bad,—too bad," muttered Pannikin, angrily. "Jemima, come here!" For Jemima had flung herself on a seat, and the young gentleman was holding her parasol with a sympathetic look.

"Come here, Jemima; the lubbers have not sunk her yet; but it's not their fault."

"Thank you, sir," said Jemima, softly and gratefully to the young gentleman; "I must go to my pa, Capting Pannikin."

"Oh, indeed! Captain Pannikin is your father, is he? I am going to join his ship." So saying, the youth in the monkey-jacket walked up to the captain, bowed, and said: "Captain Pannikin; I must introduce myself to you, sir. My name is Fontenoy, and I am just going down to join the 'Patagonian.'"

Here was a chance for the captain's dignity to assert itself, for it had been somewhat wounded, he was afraid, in the eyes of the passengers, by the skipper's cool impudence. He gave a little kind of grunt, and said:—

"You're my youngster, eh? Hem! Touch your cap to your superior officer!"

This is a change from the country gentleman of Rockshire, thought our hero, but he did as he was bid. Mrs. Pannikin looked round at the passengers to see if a proper feeling was inspired among them by this. It is astonishing how the heroes of the old school love to domineer, when they are afloat, over gentlemen who would not be seen speaking to them in Pall Mall!

"And how is Sir John Singleton?" inquired Mrs. Pannikin, loudly, and with an appearance of great interest.

"He is quite well, I thank you; we were at the Opera last night. Are you fond of music, Miss Pannikin?"

Here Singleton turned round and bowed to Jemima, who, however, began to think that it was time to participate in the parental superiority, and answered with a dignity that was somewhat forbidding. Singleton, rather surprised at all this, waited a few minutes longer with the group, and then bowed again, and walked away to the fore part of the vessel; here he meditated on his new position, and mentally compared the Pannikins with the Lepels, Pierrepoints, &c. "A queer old gentleman," he thought; "deuced like our gardener at Heatherby!"

Meanwhile, Captain Pannikin said to his wife, "The service is coming to a pretty pitch! Why, that youngster's far too old to come to sea; he wore a ring, too, and I smell perfumes yet. The service is going to the devil!"

When the steamer reached Sheerness, Singleton resolved to

make the best of his way to the guard-ship, where he was to pass his examination, but, just as he was landing, he heard a voice cry "Youngster!" and was ordered to go on board the "Sangfroid" hulk, where the "Patagonian's" crew and officers were hulked during her fitting out,—and had to carry with him a box, two large umbrellas, a washhand-stand, and two of the little Pannikins. When he returned from this mission, he went on board the guard-ship, a grand three-decker, in splendid order, and it was when he first entered her middle-deck port, and stood upon the middle deck, that he began to understand what a man-of-war was.

He found himself upon a deck, white and fresh as a tree from which the bark has just been cut: the lines which marked the division of the planks were black and delicate as if they had been drawn by an artist's brush; above him the beams were beautifully white, while, as far as the eye could reach, was a row of lofty and brilliant cannon, polished so that they shone like ebony. On the sides of the ship were long, graceful pikes, that seemed pointed with silver, and tomahawks which gleamed like mirrors. The capstan was veneered with fine wood, and was handsome enough for a drawing-room ornament; and by the sides of each hatchway bright cannon-shot rested in their shot-racks, like bagatelle-balls in their holes, no less polished, and scarcely less pretty. Seamen, neat, smart, and active, in blue and white, ran noiselessly backwards and forwards. It was a scene that represented in its perfection the pomp and beauty of war!

He was shown, as soon as he announced his object, into the ward-room, where were seated at the table the various respectable old fogies that compose a guard-ship ward-room mess; middle-aged captains of marines, masters of old standing, lieutenants who pretend to be somebodies, and young marine officers who are nobodies. They talk of politics without knowledge, and of women without principle; they criticise clubs to which they don't belong, and talk of lords whom they don't know; they are great about second-rate hotels, and discuss old anecdotes over new wine!

Singleton found the ward-room mess employed as usual; a copy of the "United Service Gazette" was on the table, and the master was reading it: he looked up:—

"A youngster to be examined," said the lieutenant, who had been kind enough to bring him in. The master growled. "I say, doctor, you examine him first," he said, looking up sulkily from his paper.

The doctor threw away a book he was employed upon, and told Singleton to come with him. The young marine officer, who was seated in a corner, thinking of his whiskers, cried, "Don't hurt him, doctor!" which was intended to frighten Singleton, who,

however, was, on the contrary, rather amused by the youth's absurdity, and mentally quoted a line in Juvenal, in which mention is made of "sea-calves," and of which we may be pretty sure the young marine officer never heard. The doctor having taken Singleton into his cabin, bid him draw a long breath, and then punched him in the breast; by which performance he ascertained the state of his health to be all right, and then it became the duty of the master to ascertain his intellectual qualifications. A wink passed between some of the mess as the master addressed himself to this task, for it was popularly believed that old Tobitt's intellectual acquirements were not great; and their own deficiencies by no means prevented his friends from thoroughly seeing his.

"Now, young gentleman," said Tobitt, "I'll give you a turn in Rule of Three, and then we'll see if you can write from dictation!"

Singleton was astonished. From the pompous announcement in the Admiralty's letter, he had expected something terrific in the way of examination, and had come up primed as if he were going in for a scholarship.

"You ain't frightened, are you?" asked Tobitt.

Singleton laughed, "Oh, no, sir," and with great glee he went through his examination—an examination just fitted to test a youth from a charity school, *æt.* 10, but which our authorities, it seems, consider quite sufficient for gentlemen who are to be officers. But ridiculous as it is, it would be as well, some people think, to apply it to certain full-grown gentlemen who are appointed to command ships.

When this was over, Singleton went on board to join his ship, and reported himself on board the "Sangfroid" hulk—a huge black vessel of gaunt aspect and dirty sides, with shirts hanging to dry between the three poles which occupied the place of masts. Singleton had a good look at her, while the shore-boat which conveyed him and his chest approached slowly through the rolling waves. The ship's company were at dinner. A bumboat, with an awning of canvass, lay alongside, well stored with red-herrings, apples, oranges, little pies, tobacco, &c.; and on this, a dog-faced monkey perched in the channels was grinning, with a greedy and cunning glance, prospective of an early spring for purposes of robbery.

The "Sangfroid" was captured from the French last war, and Singleton, as he gained the deck and looked about him, saw a pistol-shot-hole in one of the cabin windows.

"I'm come to join," said Singleton to a quartermaster who was walking up and down.

"Mr. Bertie's in charge of the watch, sir," replied the man. "He'll be here directly."

"And who is Mr. Bertie?"

"He is a mate, sir."

"And pray, what is a mate?"

"He's a midshipman as has passed, and is a waiting till they choose to make him a lieutenant," replied the quartermaster, looking surprised.

Just as he spoke, there appeared Mr. Bertie, a man probably about thirty-five, but prematurely old, and with his dark hair already dashed with grey. He both slouched and stooped as he walked. His face was rather purply—but not with the *purpureum lumen juventæ*. One of his fingers was cased in a long finger of glove, for it had been cut by something or other. The truth was, he had bruised it in striking a man not long before. His eyes were bloodshot, and his look melancholy, but somewhat fierce, and also, it must be added, somewhat intellectual and noble. He wore a seedy uniform, that seemed to fit him very badly.

"Oh, you're come to join, are you? A midshipman, eh?"

"No—a volunteer of the first class."

"Hum! Rather old, ain't you? Well, so much the better, for I'm d—d if it isn't time somebody should join! Here have I had all the work to do, and it's too bad." And here old Bertie went off into a regular "growl" of the most professional character, and terminated by requesting Singleton to report himself to the commanding officer, and to see whether he would not have the first watch to keep. But probably, the commanding officer, who was Lieutenant Primby, thought it a little too soon to begin making our friend work, so Singleton was left to go down to the gunroom and join his mess.

Descending to an infernal region, which differed chiefly from the regular one, in this, that the *descensus* was not so *facilis* as it proverbially is—Singleton entered a long gunroom with a stove in it, the pipe of which projected to an enormous length, and ultimately went out at the port. A pewter pot was on the table, with the words "*O be joyful*," engraved upon it.

When Singleton entered, a young man, in the uniform of a mate, who was sitting reading by the stove, received him very kindly. Singleton had seldom seen a person who united so much acquired to so much natural grace. His face was oval, and of gentle and intelligent expression; his eyes were dark, luminous, and soft. Many a girl would have been glad to have had such hands; and his manners were graceful and easy beyond all grace and ease but the highest.

"People usually join the service earlier than you seem to have done," said the mate to Singleton.

"Why, so I hear, but I am glad I did not."

"Perhaps it is as well, and this entry at a later period of life some have thought would be a good thing for the service, if it were made general."

"Ah, that has been meditated as a reform, has it?"

"Yes," said the mate. Then he smiled and added, "Not that I like what is now-a-days called reform, much; but you, I suppose, come from a Whig family, from your entering just now?"

"Not I, indeed," said Singleton, laughing. "My father. Fontenoy senior, would not thank you for such a supposition, I assure you."

"Indeed," said the other, who seemed pleased to hear this fact. "How did you get your appointment, then, for to my knowledge, one of the most eminent prelates on the bench tried a long time to get one for one of his family, but could not, because he was a Conservative?"

Singleton explained, and then they had a good deal of conversation on the subject, and Singleton found the mate very well informed and intellectual, and very tenaciously attached to Tory opinions.

"But we must be careful how we discuss these matters before old Bertie," he said, laughing. "Bertie is a very queer fellow. He was the eldest son of a gentleman of fortune, but through continued absence from home and neglect of his relations, he managed to let his younger brother in for his inheritance. The younger brother makes him an allowance, however, and when he gets short he comes to sea for economy. He is a violent Whig, and almost as strongly attached to his opinions as he is to his bottle. Do you know, he positively has a prejudice against me because I am a lord, and son of a Tory peer."

"That seems hard," said Singleton. "May I ask your name? I was not told."

The mate told him. He was Lord Alfred Clarion, son of the Duke of Neville. And he might have added that he was one of the best specimens of his order in the profession.

Not long afterwards, down came old Bertie, growling and swearing, and helped himself to some port.

"I mean to go on shore this evening, my lord," he said. He generally my-lorded Clarion, not as snobs do, by way of flattery, but ceremoniously, to mark his own rank, and to preserve his dignity. Nothing could have annoyed Clarion more.

"Very well, Bertie," he answered quietly.

Bertie gave a low, rolling growl. "*Mr.* is a title, my lord, as well as any other," he said.

"Very well, Mr. Bertie," said Clarion, quietly again, and glancing towards Singleton. But old Bertie, who naturally was essentially a good-hearted person, was mollified, and looking

up, said, "I did not mean the observation disagreeably, you know."

"I did not take it so, I assure you." And after this little fencing scene, Bertie took some more wine, and then he called out to Singleton by the usual title of "youngster," to come and help him to unpack a carpet-bag. From this, with Singleton's aid, he dragged out a huge, broad-tailed plain coat, which he meditated wearing that evening on shore. While fumbling in the pockets, he drew out a card bearing the name of "Captain Tinker," and after staring stupidly at it for some time, the old boy burst into a laugh, and speedily communicated the laugh to the others, by explaining, that last time he wore that coat, about three months before, he had had a quarrel in a coffee-room with a stranger, which had ended in an exchange of cards. But having returned on board with his brain in a state of confusion, he had forgotten all about it, and it had never returned to his memory till that moment.

"Not that I would not have fought the fellow if I had remembered it," he said, and this met with ready credence, for Bertie's pluck was indubitable. The old boy now brought out a pewter basin and began to wash himself in a corner. While he was performing this operation, Singleton looked out of the after port at the shore, where the tribe of Esquimaux who inhabit Sheerness live. Presently he was startled by a tremendous roar of "youngster," and turning round, he saw Bertie groping about like Polyphemus, with his eyes half blinded with soap, and reduced to desperation by want of a towel.

"Bring a towel, youngster,—quick!"

Singleton rushed to his chest and produced one, which Bertie used with avidity. After this he borrowed a collar from him, and touched up his ropy old whiskers with a pocket-comb, mounted the eccentric coat, and prepared for his departure.

"Now, youngster, give me down that cocked-hat box."

Once more Singleton obeyed orders, and took down from the beams a triangular-shaped box of a bronze colour. Diving into this, Bertie raked up a cigar wrapped in paper, and unrolled it. The paper was a five-pound note, for he was eccentric in everything. Putting this in his pocket, and biting off the end of the cigar, old Bertie took one more glass of port, and then poured out one for Singleton.

"Drink that, youngster. Here's luck!" and off he went.

Lord Clarion, who had been still reading by the stove, and glancing up occasionally, smiled as Singleton resumed his seat, and said, "Well, that is a mate of ten years' standing—one of a breed that will soon be as extinct as the dodo. But don't suppose that this apparent barbarism of Bertie's lies deep. He

is a very thoughtful and sensible person, and you will like him better by and bye."

"Well, he is a lucky fellow to be waited on by Norman blood," said Fontenoy, laughing. "Kings can have no more."

"Well," said Lord Clarion, "I am glad to see you are good-natured. That is a great point. Good-nature is the beauty of the mind, and, like personal beauty, wins, almost without anything else,—sometimes, indeed, in spite of positive deficiencies."

At this moment the quartermaster put his head in at the door. "If you please, my lord, Mr. Primby wants you to 'look out,' for he is going on shore."

"Very well, I will do so, tell him." Then turning to Singleton, as he rose to get his uniform cap, Clarion said, with a smile, "Primby is like England in Nelson's signal; he 'expects every man to do *his* duty."

With which capital *mot* (which the author must state is not his own, but was heard by him afloat), Lord Clarion departed for the deck.

In the evening other new youngsters who had joined came down to the berth, and Singleton made their acquaintance. One was young Lord Strawberry, one of the rising hopes of the Whig noble family, De Fraise. Two of his brothers were in the Home Office, one governed a minor colony, one was in the army, and one was a "commissioner." Alfred was sent to pick up what he could for himself in the navy. He was a little, blue-eyed, pale-faced fellow of fourteen; good-natured enough, but not remarkable in other respects. There was also young Bludgeon, son of a banker in the provinces somewhere, who married a lady of family, and so got his share of public appointments; and Box, a sturdy young booby, who had been sent to sea for thrashing the usher where he was at school; and Rowdy Gaffer, son of a magistrate in London, before whom he had once or twice been taken up in the morning, and who had been thus heavily fined by his own parent, a conscientious man of the Brutus order.

"It seems there's to be a naval instructor," said Bludgeon, mournfully.

"I'm cussed if I came to sea for that!" cried Box, savagely. "I've had enough of school!"

"I vote we agree to learn nothing," said Gaffer.

"We can easily do that," said Singleton, laughing.

"Hear, hear!" cried Gaffer, taking it up seriously.

"I say," drawled out Strawberry, who was sprawling on the cushions on the lockers, and who now stretched out his arms languidly,—"I say, Fontenoy, have you seen the Pannikin girls?"

"I saw them this morning."

"What do you think of them, eh?" drawled the boy listlessly.

"Jemima's what is called a fine girl."

"There is rather too much of her," yawned the noble. "Mother P.'s slow, and old P.'s a plebeian."

"Don't give yourself any of your aristocratic airs here," cried Box (whose father, a Radical, had bullied Government out of this youth's appointment); "Oligarchy's not the time of day now But I mean to lick that squinting young Pannikin when I can do it on the sly."

"I don't see why we should be sent to take care of the Pannikins," said Bludgeon, with a melancholy look.

"I gave one of the children to a policeman, to take charge of, the other day, while I went for a glass of ale," said Gaffer.

"The ship's company are gone to supper," said Box. "I have a tick with the bumboat woman. We'll devil some herrings, and have some rum-and-water. We dined too early."

This was agreed to, in the absence of anything more interesting; and Box, putting his head out of the gunroom door, called to somebody to pass the word for boy Brown. This unhappy boy was attendant of the mess, and he presently made his appearance with a very dirty face. He received his orders.

"Please, sir, Mr. McScrimp [this was the assistant-surgeon] said, the young gentlemen was not to have rum."

"Curse your impudence, you whelp!" cried Box, ferociously. "Bring the rum *instanter!*"

"I dare not, sir," said the boy.

"Let us cob McScrimp,—I'm game!" cried Box.

"Hear, hear!" cried Gaffer. "He's down in his dispensary, in the cockpit."

"Stop," cried Strawberry; "I can manage him. Boy, Lord Strawberry's compliments to Mr. McScrimp, and would be much obliged for a little of the mess rum." This was said with great dignity, for this young gentleman had already learned that his title was potent with a certain class of people. Box grumbled, but it seemed the best plan; and indeed it was quite successful. A suppliant lord was a phenomenon that none of the McScrimp family, till the present Angus of that name, had ever encountered. It was not in snobbery to resist it, and the rum was thus procured.

So the "youngsters" having the gunroom to themselves that evening (for Clarion retired early), spent it very sociably together, and gave each other long accounts of their families and relations, and what "tin" they would have, and what they did at school. They congratulated themselves on their escape

from home, laughed at old Pannikin, vowed vengeance against McScrimp, and went to bed in high good humour.

CHAPTER II.

Master. What cheer?
Boatswain. Good: speak to the mariners: fall to't yarely . . . . . Bestir, bestir. THE TEMPEST.

Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor.
VIRGIL. *Æneid.* iii. 128.

NEXT morning, Singleton awoke for the first time in his life in a hammock, and as he started out of a dream, knocked his head against the beams above rather sharply. But in the cause of our country we must bear these little things. Besides, all this was Action and a Career. At least, so our friend tried to persuade himself. But why anticipate disappointment? It is only at a later period of life, that we begin to discover that there can be no true action, till our spiritual tendencies and our worldly avocations work in harmony. He who can achieve that condition, has found his true career. Whereas, to the great majority, viz., those who take up a profession from accident, or interest, the world is nothing but a huge treadmill in which they work away mechanically—either patient animals, or discontented men.

The "Sangfroid" hulk was a line-of-battle vessel, and the midshipmen accordingly slept in the after cockpit, or orlop deck. In the centre of this stood an amputation-table, as it was called (*a non amputando*, I suppose, for no amputations used to take place on it), but which they used to wash on. Here stood the row of little pewter basins. Here the young gentlemen performed their toilets, each attended by a marine as servant. Singleton got hold of an old Scotchman to attend him, who thought it part of his duty to be paternal, and to give good advice to his master, which was no doubt very disinterested, but which was sometimes rather a bore.

After he had dressed, Singleton was wandering about the main deck, when he perceived the flutter of a green gown on the main ladder, and this apparition was succeeded by the descent of a youthful female, who, encumbered as she was with a large parcel, seemed to find it difficult to move. Singleton gallantly stepped forward to assist her, and by his aid she landed safely, and then acknowledged the courtesy with a smile. Scarcely had she done so, when a loud, roughvoice was heard loudly exclaiming—"Hillo, young gentleman, steady there, keep her away, ho!"

At these words, Singleton looked round, and perceived an elderly man in a blue jacket, with a silver ornament of mysterious shape hanging from his neck, coming up to join them. His manner oddly managed to combine the roughness of a common sailor, with a species of dignity hard to describe.

"Hillo, Bet my lass, kiss your old dad!" cried this old boy. And then he turned to Singleton, "I say, my young gentleman's son, you're beginning early. Now you had better just up helm and be off, or I'll see what Captain Pannikin says to it."

"And pray who are you?" inquired Singleton, angrily.

"I am Mr. Bagg, boatswain of H.M.S. 'Patagonian,'" was the reply.

Singleton saw the state of things. The young lady was Miss Bagg, and her father could not but place any but one construction on a midshipman's speaking to her. It was an unfortunate prejudice, but perhaps natural. However, he spoke very civilly to Mr. Bagg, who allowed himself to be convinced he was mistaken, and then sent his daughter down to the cabin and continued the conversation. "You must excuse me, you see, sir. Young gentlemen are not always to be trusted, and my daughter's just a-growing up. It's dangerous."

Here a voice shouted down the hatchway, "Call away the ship's party." Out jumped Mr. Bagg's call, and he gave a tremendous whistle, followed by a tremendous roar. Seamen and marines poured up the ladders in swarms.

"Mr. Fontenoy wanted," cried a quartermaster at that moment, and Singleton ran up on deck, and found that he had to go on board the "Patagonian," with all the other youngsters, to "learn the work," by Captain Pannikin's orders.

The "Patagonian" was progressing as fast as ropes, paint, tar, noise, dirt, and swearing could make her. The topmasts were up, and bowsprit out, and the guns were being hoisted in. Perched in the centre, was a smart hatchet-faced lieutenant giving orders, crying, "blue-jackets" here, and "marines" there; and though dividing the crew into these ranks, yet occasionally addressing them in comprehensive unity, by an unmentionable designation. Here, mark the force of professional habit. In spite of this, this lieutenant was a gentleman, and went into very good society,—and waltzed, flirted, and twaddled, like ordinary people. It is quite an affair of habit—and thus the honest scavenger, when his day's work is over, retires to the bosom of his family, and becomes a decent man.

"Hem, hem," cried a voice near Singleton, and he beheld Captain Pannikin. The worthy officer was red in the face with exertion, and was somewhat in a state of perplexity; for, not having been afloat since 1818, he kept ordering things to be

done which nobody understood, and using language to lieutenants which they did not like. That morning, he addressed Bertie, as "you sir," to that gentleman's intense disgust, so that old Bertie, indeed, came growling down into the gun-room, and swore that he would write for his discharge, and horsewhip him when he obtained it. He offended Primby, the second lieutenant, a west-end dandy of some standing, who set an enormous value on people's "connections," and consequently despised his captain; who wore white kid gloves, and carried a delicate telescope, like an overgrown opera-glass. It seemed that Primby was wearing a rose in his button-hole, when Pannikin came up to him.

"Uniform, Mr. Primby, hem! Always wear uniform, hem!"

"Sir?" said Primby, rather loftily, drawing himself up, and glancing at what he considered his unexceptionable attire.

"Roses, eh, Mr. Primby? not uniform, hem!"

Mr. Primby removed the rose, but once again fell into the mistake, which caused a feud between him and Pannikin, which was never properly made up. And this, Lord Clarion used to call the "War of the Roses."

Next, Captain Pannikin had an unpleasantness with his commander, Commander Modell. This was an officer of the school of H.M.S. "Excellent," and more remarkable for science than seamanship. He was a man of superior understanding, and very considerable information in the severer parts of knowledge. Without a quarrel,—yet it was evident there could be no sympathy between him and Pannikin.

Again, the first lieutenant and Captain Pannikin had nothing in common. Lieutenant Tressel was a military-naval man. All his sympathies were with the sister service. He had a very military bearing, and wore his coat buttoned up. He made the band play his wife's quadrilles, and was one of the first of the reading public who welcomed with enthusiasm the dawning genius of Mr. Lever.

Thus the materials of considerable disturbance already existed in H.M.S. "Patagonian" ere she had left Sheerness. And as similar elements existed in the gunroom mess, Singleton began to think that he should enjoy in his first ship the advantage of seeing a great many of the peculiarities of the profession.

"Hem!" went Captain Pannikin, as I said above. "Mr. Fontenoy, you must be my aide-de-camp. Bring all the youngsters here." And so saying, he drew himself up, and grunted as was his wont. Fontenoy went off accordingly, and returned with my Lord Strawberry, Messrs. Bludgeon, Box, and Rowdy Gaffer. These young gentlemen having been shown into

the captain's cabin, Captain Pannikin began to address them on the importance of propriety of conduct in general.

"Now, Mr. Strawberry?"

"Lord Strawberry, if you please, Captain Pannikin."

"What! Oh, I forgot. Very well, then, my lord. But remember, sir, for the future,—never tell your captain he's wrong. A captain can't be wrong, ugh, hem!" (These peculiar ejaculations of the captain's are as difficult to render as the Greek particles, properly—the reader's imagination and ear must aid). "Do you hear? hem! And, sir, if you were Jupiter Hammon you should do your work in my ship!"

Why Pannikin peculiarly favoured Jupiter Ammon in preference to Jupiter Olympius, or any other deity, was never discovered; but certain it is, he frequently swore by and appealed to him. The common notion was, that having by chance once met the name in a book, he had taken some fanciful liking to it.

"Mr. Box, I hear you went on badly at school; be careful here, sir, hem!" Box looked savage.

"Mr. Gaffer, I hope you don't like rum—eh, ugh, hem!" here something stuck in the speaker's throat. Gaffer mentally prayed that he would choke—but he didn't.

"Mr. Bludgeon, now that you serve the Queen, pray, sir, be smart and officer-like, ugh!" For Bludgeon was one of those creeping, melancholy fellows one sometimes encounters, who have a turn for mechanism—who prowl about the decks, making experiments with tar, and cutting up chips of wood—who execute clumsy models in deal, and make discoveries in steam that have been found out and rejected long ago. Thus they are apt to be slovens; they borrow tools from the carpenter's crew, and spoil them; they litter the gunroom with shavings and steel filings, and they crib cartridges from the gunner. Bludgeon having once incautiously stated that he meant to join the Turkish navy by-and-by, was forthwith raised by the mess to the title of Bludgeon Pasha—varied occasionally by that of Roker Bey. But if Bludgeon's tastes were not elegant they were useful, and he was a very industrious and intelligent fellow.

"Mr. Fontenoy—as you are older than any of the others, I shall expect you to set a good example. I hear you are studious—stick to Inman, sir, ugh!" Mr. Fontenoy bowed.

This discourse finished, Captain Pannikin went to visit the gunroom, which was being painted and prepared for the midshipmen, as it was expected that the hands would shortly shift over from the "Sangfroid" to the ship. Here he was followed by his faithful youngsters. They found Lord Clarion (who was of an elegant and fanciful taste) superintending the operation.

And indeed Singleton was surprised to see how much was ca-

pable of being made of such an unpromising place. The beams and the tiller (which traverses this nautical apartment) were painted a very bright white. The two guns were painted white, except the part which was outside the port; and the body of the cabin was done like wainscot. The stanchion itself was under the hands of an ingenious mechanic, who was colouring it in a very brilliant manner.

Captain Pannikin looked round with obvious astonishment at proceedings which had so little in common with those he had been accustomed to in his youth. At last he paused before the stanchion.

"Hem, ugh—what's that, Lord Clarion, eh? What do you call that?"

"It is an imitation of *lapis lazuli*, sir," said Clarion, in his low, melodious voice, and bowing.

Pannikin would not have lived in vain if Mr. Leech had been there to catch his air of puzzled astonishment at these words. It was indeed a picture. It was the old school brought into contact with the new.

"Hem, ah—service changed since my time," he muttered, and off he went. The youngsters followed in his wake, as he phrased it; and he traversed the decks, one by one. All was animation and activity. Primby was directing the men who were getting in stores, in the voice of a master of the ceremonies; Bertie was bullying away, in his usual style; while Commander Modell, who never condescended to abusive language, stimulated the lazy by the employment of a tone of polished sarcasm and irony, which irritated them ten times as much; for sailors rather like a man who abuses them in good hearty Billingsgate slang, and thus the Patagonians had no great love for the scientific and intellectual Modell, who reproached them in the style of Junius, and affected to imitate Fonblanque when he was calling out to the fellows on the mainyard!

After this inspection, Captain Pannikin, who was by no means an inhospitable man, took off his faithful youngsters to dine with him at his lodgings on shore. The advent of such a band created no small sensation in the family, and apparently some terror; for young Jacob Pannikin, the cross-jack-eyed (a delicate naval name for one who squints), set up a species of howl, and said, "Pa! there won't be enough?" Box would have liked to thrash him, but, unhappily, that was impossible while he was under the protection of his Penates; but his father gave a severe grunt, and checked him.

The Pannikins gracefully condescended during dinner, and it went off pleasantly enough. That young aristocrat, Lord Strawberry, who was fast learning the advantages of rank, talked to

Mrs. and the Misses Pannikin (the young rogue!) about the fashionable world, all dinner-time, much to Fontenoy's amusement and Box's disgust. What with his eye-glass and this conversation, he was indeed an interesting object of study, but he did not perceive that the worthy captain himself was not so much impressed by him as the women; indeed, Captain Pannikin, though a Tory (until the late election at Potborough, that is), had rather a dislike (arising from a mixture of early prejudice and personal pomposity) to people of title.

When they left the house in the evening (with strict injunctions to return on board the hulk immediately), young Strawberry proposed that they should go to some billiard-rooms. Not being much taller than a billiard-table himself, this seemed odd,—but the navy is the most precocious of all schools, and they went accordingly. The marker, with a proper respect for their uniform, showed them every attention, and Lord Strawberry availed himself of a stool to stand upon, that he might do full justice to his powers.

"What cussed airs that young whelp gives himself!" said Box to Fontenoy, confidentially, as the party were sauntering down to the jetty, to take a boat to go off to the hulk.

"The Pannikins were civil to-day, eh?" said Strawberry, as they rowed along. "A worthy fellow, the captain!"

"You need not have come it quite so strong about your titled fellows," said Box, sulkily.

"Is it my fault that I belong to the aristocracy. I can't help being noble, can I, Fontenoy?" said Strawberry, with a melancholy whine.

Box growled, and they said nothing further on the subject, but reached the hulk in peace.

Day by day the fitting progressed, and still higher and higher stretched the tall spars of the line-of-battle ship to the sky, and cordage gathered between her lofty masts thick and intricate, like a gigantic web; the plain yellow colour of her sides was changed for the chess-board chequered black and white, which, if I mistake not, was first introduced by Nelson. The crew had shifted over from the "Sangfroid"—our friend Bertie having taken care, before parting finally with the gunroom, to carve sundry words deep into the table, regardless of the disfigurement. It was only by regularly damaging, in this kind of way, the deal tables formerly supplied, that our officers shamed the authorities into furnishing them with the more pretentious articles now in use in the service. Here the philosopher may observe a type of that extraordinary species of public polity called Agitation, which, by an analogous process, damages the present good, in the effort to secure a future one! Pity it has not always the same success!

At last the "Patagonian" received orders to proceed round to Portsmouth, prior to leaving England. New officers joined. She went out to the Nore, and took her powder on board. Then she spread her white sails to the wind, and curved her first line in the blue waters of the Channel.

At Spithead more officers joined, who will be introduced to the reader as occasion requires. Public wants caused every despatch to be made in manning the vessel, and preparing to proceed to her station. For a cloud was gathering in the East, and the stately and gorgeous Albanian, and the gay Syrian, and the grave Ottoman, were assembling for war.

Before she finally weighed, she was inspected by my Lord Muddle, of the Twopenny Claudian Family, of the English Patrician Order. He was a sullen, sallow man, with a worldly face, and a cunning eye. He bowed to the officers, and remarked jocularly as he passed the compasses, that they were "very useful things"—rather superfluous information to a sailor, but then we must remember, that this lord was a governor of the navy under our present system, and was of course anxious to show that he had some acquaintance with nautical matters. He went round the ship, then announced that he would go on shore again, and was walking with that object towards the stern, when Captain Pannikin, not without a suppressed grin, conducted him to the gangway.

"Hands up anchor!" A whistle, and the rush of many feet, and the huge bars are placed in the capstan, and the men bend over and embrace them eagerly. The band strikes up a shrill, stirring melody. Stamp! stamp; Round goes the capstan. The iron cable and messenger rattle noisily along the lower deck, like the chains of the damned. The huge ship sways heavily head to wind, and the white waves beat against her bows, as she advances to the spot where the anchor lies.

"Loose sails, man the rigging, 'way aloft!" The masts and yards swarm with men, thick as the leaves were upon them once, long, long ago. High up towards the sky, where the light royal masts taper, young sailor-boys are climbing like squirrels. The word is given to let fall. Down falls the white canvass. Hoist away! And you see the topsails rising and fluttering in the wind, full of life.

"Heave and a-weigh!" The cable is tight. The anchor lies deep in the earth's embrace far below. But human arms are strong. The capstan bars are hugged desperately—like the embrace of love—like the embrace of death. Together! "Can the earth which is dead and a vision, resist spirits that have

reality and are alive?"* There is a break—a start—a mad rush. Round spins the capstan, like a dancing Dervish. The sails shiver, as in fear. What, had the fair green Isle of Wight broken from its moorings, and like old Delos, taken to swim on the sea that loves it so well? Ah, we are away! The mighty yards are swung to the wind, and the "Patagonian," sublime in its ugliness—like Mirabeau—is off to sea.

It was evening—evening in the early summer, and sunset. The glorious old sun was drowning in the blue ocean. All the west blazed with colour, and he seemed to be turning the wide sea into wine! There are no perfumes from thy shore, oh England, but there is refreshment in the gaze on thy green hills. Pleasant are thy white dwellings, and fair are thy snowy cliffs.

A calm came soon. The sea was covered with shipping. There lay little fishing-boats with sails motionless in calm, and looking like white butterflies resting on blue flowers. The line-of-battle ship, herself, was still as a sleeping giant. Her sails hung lazily down, and her long, bright pendant drooped, and twined round the top-gallant backstays like a gaudy snake.

CHAPTER III.

THERE are only two things that are of the slightest value against sea-sickness, and these are brandy and fresh air. When you begin to feel the fatal qualmishness stealing over you—take some brandy and go on deck. There is nothing else for it. Then, the more pluck you have the better. When you are ill, give in—but like a man, like a gladiator who sees there is no chance, but yet even yields boldly. Then take more brandy, and keep on deck. However, how vain all advice on this terrible matter is! Talk of the *maladie de pays!* What is that to the *maladie de mer*. It has a tragic interest too, this miserable illness; for when the good old Cicero (dear to all men of letters be his name!) was flying from the savage debauchee who murdered him, he took to the sea, and sea-sickness drove him on shore to his assassins.

How wretched Fontenoy was in the Bay of Biscay, through which the old "Patagonian" thundered under double reefs with a fair wind! However, he hit upon the remedies mentioned above, while poor little Strawberry was nearly defunct in the after cockpit, and Box suffered martyrdom; for he lay down

* Sartor Resartus.

miserably on the lockers in the gunroom, and an old mate cruelly provoked him by dangling a piece of fat pork, on a string, before his languid eyes! A delicate piece of humour this! But then it was an *old* mate, one of those, no doubt, who in former times, used to spit in their glass of grog, before going out of the gunroom, to prevent any one from appropriating it, in their absence!

When the weather became milder, the "youngsters" had to go to school. What an Academe! A canvass screen surrounded a wooden table; inside this, they sat with the naval instructor, Mr. Bobb, who taught them to dislike navigation. Mr. Bobb might have taught Charon how to navigate the Styx as far as sympathy and kindred thought went. He was an eminently disagreeable little man, with some science, and no literature. He knew nothing of the classics, but could teach French—I mean a dialect of it. He had a prejudice against the Church of England, as vulgar men often have, and had a great love of money. So he sneered at, and avoided the chaplain, and was most intimate with the purser. This was another Scotchman (for I have mentioned McScrimp, the assistant-surgeon already), by name McStirk. McStirk and Bobb used to retire to a cabin and discuss a bottle together. McStirk bullied his purser's steward so, that it was supposed to be the chief reason why that poor fellow, who was always of a melancholy turn, one day committed suicide in the bread-room.

In addition to Mr. Bobb, the youngsters were instructed by the boatswain, by Captain Pannikin's express orders, in the art of making knots. There are the "running bowline," and the "fisherman's bend," and the "crown," and heaven knows how many more. Box studied all these, for he had a great ambition to be able to make a "colt," which is a curious instrument of chastisement used by naval men. It was this occupation that first brought Singleton into any intimate communication with Commander Modell. The youngsters were assembled on the main-deck, each with a piece of "inch-and-a-half," and Singleton was working away in a state of great perplexity, when Commander Modell came up and said, "What are you doing there, Mr. Fontenoy?"

"Making a 'Matthew Walker,' sir," answered Singleton, touching his hat, and looking ruefully at the rope. Now, the said "Matthew Walker," if I remember right, is a regular Gordian knot in its difficulty.

"Ah," said Modell, looking at the performance, "you had better get the boatswain to show you how to do it."

"It's certainly a 'dignus vindice *nodus*,'" replied Singleton, by a sudden impulse of facetiousness, and smiling.

The commander started. Then he smiled also in a queer, grim kind of way. "Very good, Mr. Fontenoy, but for the future, sir, remember, if you please, that it's not customary in the service to pun to your superior officer." Singleton begged his pardon, and was considerably abashed, but Commander Modell was rather prepossessed in his favour from that day.

In the mean time, the gunroom mess seemed threatened with one of those movements known in modern times as a "disruption." Party spirit ran so terrifically high! And no wonder—when we remember that at that time no Tory could expect promotion, and that every Whig expected it as a matter of course. The Tory mates used accordingly to lick the Whig youngsters, and so on—and upon the whole, this political mess, when we consider the purity of its political motives, the profundity of its knowledge, and how much principle had to do with its party violence, was no bad type of more important assemblies!

One morning, when they were in sight of the coast of Portugal, some sixteen of the mess were assembled in the gunroom, variously employed. Lord Clarion was reading, on a chair near the larboard gun; so was Somers, a very sharp little mate of the Tory party, with an eye quick enough to see everything but his own faults. Lovell, a tall, thin, spoony midshipman, usually called "Lady Margaret," was cleaning a flute which he dared not attempt to play. The second master, old Plebbe, was making a lunar on some dirty paper. Snigg, the clerk—a facetious, satirical fellow, was dozing off the effects of last night's rum on the lockers. Singleton was reading. Strawberry was asleep, while Box was cautiously stealing away the desk which supported his head. Bludgeon, as usual, was making a model with some hard wood and a blunt knife.

In came old Bertie, who had had the morning watch, and had just been dressing himself in the cockpit. Every pimple on his purply old face had an irate look. Clarion and Somers interchanged glances.

"Good morning, Bertie," said Lord Clarion.

"I wish you a good morning, my lord," said Bertie, with a very low and formal bow. Then he glanced round the lockers, and perceived that they were almost wholly tenanted by "youngsters." So he coolly went and seized young Strawberry by the legs, and slowly dragged him away from his resting-place.

"Come, young shaver, you have all night in: make room for me."

"Don't hurt his lordship," said that malignant young imp, Box, who wished to see a row.

"What, do you call that thing a lord?" cried Bertie, lifting

up the unhappy noble by his trousers and coat, in imitation of a well-known saying of Brummell's. There was a great roar of laughter, and Strawberry was furious as he was put down again. Just as Bertie was composing himself to sleep, a hideous noise, which was positively unearthly, resounded through the room. The fact is, that *the band* of the ship had their mess on the lower deck, just outside the gunroom, and next to it. And this noise was occasioned by a fit of playfulness which had suddenly seized the gentleman who performed on the bassoon. This proximity of the band was one of the standing nuisances of the mess, a standing grievance, and apparently unavoidable. Over and over again had the master of the band been bullied about such noises —over and over again had he faithfully promised there should be no "practising" anywhere but in the cable-tier.

There was a general laugh, just now, at this noise, and everybody glanced at Bertie, who was lying with his eyes shut. He was a sworn foe to all music, and particularly to this band.

The facetious clerk, Snigg, awoke at this moment, tolerably refreshed by his slumber, and wiped away a kind of apoplectic foam that used to gather about his lips during his stertorous repose. Indeed, Sniggs being seized with apoplexy was a thing confidently expected by the mess, facetiously alluded to by many, and rather wished for, as a lark, by some. He now rubbed his eyes, and said—

> "The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
> For he heard the loud bassoon!"

Snigg was a very tolerable wag, and had once read a great deal; for, for the last six years, he had got on without replenishing his old stock.

Just as he said this, another sepulchral sound issued from the band's mess. Up jumped Bertie.

"By G—, this is too bad!" he cried. "I'll leave the ship, hang me if I don't!"

"It is shameful," said Lord Clarion.

"Orpheus went to hell," said Snigg; "and hang me if every cussed musician oughtn't to follow."

"I shall cut the service, and join the Guards," drawled young Strawberry.

"Hillo—he's taken worse," cried Box, as a still more dismal sound was heard.

"Human nature can stand it no longer!" said Bertie. So he jumped up, opened the door, and roared out to the master of the band to come in immediately. The poor man entered, cap in hand, very civilly, and was severely lectured by Bertie for ten minutes. When he had gone—

"Hang bands!" said Bertie; "there were no such things when I joined the service."

"I thought you liked reform," said Somers, with a sneer.

"I like reform, of course, and so do all but the selfish, who lose power by it," said Bertie; "but every innovation is not a reform."

"Hear, hear!" cried Clarion, markedly. The Tories laughed, and looked at Bertie.

"I suppose that noise means something," said Bertie, sarcastically; "but I should like to know what. Some brays are as bad as the braying of the band trumpets."

Here the Whigs laughed. Box was charmed; a quarrel among the "oldsters" was honey to him.

"Nae doot o' that," said McScrimp, with a most hideous wink and leer at Clarion and Somers.

Poor McScrimp intended this as a sarcasm against Bertie. He had no opinions himself, but toadied Clarion (who despised him), in the vague and dismal hope that he would, at some future day, be allowed to promenade his raw-boned figure in the saloons of Neville House.

"Particularly the *braes* of bonnie Doon," said Snigg, looking at him and mimicking.

There was here a general laugh at McScrimp from both parties. Box shouted and roared in a most exaggerated style; so McScrimp fastened on him, as a youngster, and struck him. Box was fierce, but McScrimp was twice as old, and three times as strong: he got him on the lockers, and struck him hard two or three times. Box's eyes flashed fire; he was as savage as a young bull-dog: in the impotence of his wrath, he spit in McScrimp's face. The Scotchman knocked his head against a desk savagely.

There was a loud cry of "shame," but the oldsters did not like to interfere with one of their own order. Unfortunately, thrashing was not a very rare phenomenon, and Lord Clarion, besides, was somewhat disgusted with Box's spitting, although so provoked. The chastisement continued, when, with a spring, Fontenoy, whose blood boiled like a torrent, rushed at McScrimp, and gave him a terrible facer between the eyes. McScrimp uttered a cry,—struck out at Singleton,—hit him in the middle of the face. Whew! in an instant the blood of the De Fontenoys—that Norman blood, on which poor Singleton prided himself—was spurting all over his face. As he drew breath he tasted it: he rushed at McScrimp again. Box had jumped up; and the bully was pinned by the throat.

"Stop it, stop it," cried half a dozen fellows, rushing to the spot.

"No, by G——" said Bertie, who saw that McScrimp had gone down, and that Rowdy Gaffer had pounced in at this crisis, to join his brother youngsters. Old Bertie grew ferocious at the sight of blood and fighting.—"The man that meddles must dare to touch me!"

"I appeal to you as a man of sense and feeling," cried Clarion, coming up.

Here McScrimp groaned. The youngsters were frightened. Clarion drew back Box, who seemed to stick to his victim, like a gorging leech. Bertie cooled,—the combatants rose up,—they were separated.

"Go below, and wash yourselves, for Heaven's sake!" said Clarion, laughing; "we positively must have a Riot Act to read in this mess."

Box, with a desperately swollen lip, looked fiercely round. He could scarcely see Singleton, but he came up to him, and shook his hand like a madman, and began to cry.—"It ain't the licking got [sob, sob, went Box, nearly choking], it's because you [sob, sob] were hit!—Bless you, old fellow."

Singleton luckily came off safe, as regarded the eyes. He wiped his face with one of the handkerchiefs that Augusta Lepel had worked his crest in. It was a nice time to be reminded of her!

The youngsters descended to the cockpit, and roared out for their servants:—down came two or three marines.

"Lor, how gash ye look, Muster Fontenoy!" said Geordie Webb, his servant.

"Water," said Singleton, briefly.

"Ay, ay; ye need it, I'm thinking; ay, ay. Noo, sir, ye ken——"

"Water, Webb."

"Ay, ay," said Webb, who did not seem to be quite as sober as he might have been. In truth, it was thought by some people, that old Webb had acquired the art (sometimes acquired at sea) of going through all his duties with mechanical propriety when considerably intoxicated, and keeping clear of punishment without losing the enjoyment of rum.

Webb slowly raised the chest, took out the basin, looked in it, rubbed it vaguely, then started to the main-deck to the tank for the water. While his master was bathing himself, he stood by, respectfully, with a towel—

> "Let dogs delight,
> To bark and bite,"

began Webb, musingly.

"Hold your tongue, Webb. Hand me that bottle."

Webb brought out the *Eau-de-Cologne*, and first put it to his nose before handing it to his master.

Singleton looked at the bottle and shook it. "I hope, Webb, you don't drink this?" he said, pouring some out into the hollow of his hand, to bathe his forehead with.

If he had said this to an English servant, the man would have bridled up, denied it with indignation, and begged he would provide himself with another man. But Webb was Scotch, and the lower orders of Scotland are the best educated in Europe, as we all know.

So he gave a quiet series of satirical chuckles. "Hech, hech, sir, that's nae sae bad!" and appeared to treat the idea as too ridiculous for refutation. The truth was that Webb *had* tried the bottle, and considered it "puir stuff, but better than naething."

"Hech, hech, sir," he continued, "I tell ye hoo ye may mak sure o' my na drinking it,—gie me some rum!"

"A clean handkerchief, Webb;" and having got this without more parley, Singleton returned to the gunroom. Box, whose swollen lip pouted enormously, was there. McScrimp was in his dispensary, and had put himself in the sick-list. The same was done for Box, by the other assistant-surgeon, through the agency of Lord Clarion, who, with characteristic good-nature, managed to hush up the affair, and prevent its being brought before the quarter-deck authorities. All such complaints to Captain Pannikin ended unpleasantly, for that great officer having no capacity for analyzing and pronouncing on conflicting evidence, used to sum up generally, by saying that "both parties were in the wrong," which at least was impartial, and which was certainly brief.

At one o'clock the mess sat down to dinner, with all despatch, for the ship was drawing near land. There was soup at each end, and at one end presided McScrimp. The youngsters sat next him. This is one of the comforts of the service; you must sit, for weeks and weeks, near a person to whom you don't speak, and who perhaps hates you mortally. "Soup, Mr. Box," said McScrimp, sulkily.

"If you please," said Box, savagely.

"I'll trouble you for the salt," said McScrimp to Gaffer, with the look of a demon.

Gaffer passed it, with the glance of a ghoul. Very agreeable all this, thought Singleton, who was in a state of remorse and disgust.

"This is very good soup," said Strawberry, good-naturedly.

"Soup and bully, eh?" said Snigg, nudging him and glancing towards McScrimp. Box gave a ghastly grin.

"Mr. Box, a glass of Marsala?" said old Bertie, in a marked tone, while some of the mess laughed. McScrimp looked like the Dweller of the Threshold. Box, who was ready to take wine with anybody, or indeed without ceremony, drank very cordially. The Patagonians had two quarter-casks of that popular wine suspended in the gun-room, to say nothing of supplies below. What would Benbow say, could he see a midshipman's mess at dinner now-a-days? Well, let him sleep on!—if he wakes a few years hence, I dare say he will see a *cordon bleu* presiding at the galley-fire!

"Hands, bring ship to an anchor," cried a quartermaster, abruptly thrusting his head in at the door, almost before dinner was over.

The mess rushed on deck, and Singleton to the mizen-top, which was his station, and where, like the celebrated cherub, he had to "sit up aloft." The ship was running up the Tagus with a fair wind. The deep rich blue waters were sparkling in the sun, and sunlight streamed over the fair undulating hills and valleys, with their bright villages and spacious vineyards, —fair nurses of different children, pauper peasants, and rich grapes.

Near the man at the wheel stood a singular figure, the Portugese pilot.—This was a little fellow in a red nightcap and jack boots, with a tawny, wrinkled face, like a decayed lemon. Fixing his eyes on a known village or house on shore, he guided himself by such landmarks, and accompanied each direction with a little convulsive jerk of his right hand. "Mak him stabboard; go port!" There was perfect silence on board as the ship ran on, broken occasionally by a plunge of the lead in the water, and the long, low, wailing cry of the man in the chains, as he gathered in the dripping-line, and sang out the depth found.

Captain Pannikin paraded the poop with his huge glass. Lieutenant Primby was on the quarter-deck, occasionally pulling up his white gloves, and arranging his collar and odorous curls. The military Tressel presided on the forecastle; the scientific Commander Modell stood on one of the quarter-deck carronade slides.

"Maintop, there," cried Modell; "where is the industrious Jones?"

"Here I am, sir," cries the captain of the top, in high indignation.

"Ah! let us have some variety to-day! Let us see the top-gallant studding-sails come in properly. Pray, sir, is that a tinker in the cross-trees, or the congenial cobbler?" I have already mentioned that Modell was of the new school, and never used abusive language; but I hardly know why an honest tinker or

cobbler should be so contemptible in nautical eyes; yet there can be no bitterer reproach than to compare a seaman to one of these mechanics.

"Take in the studding-sails and royals," said Pannikin, from the poop, with a grunt.

"Lower studding-sail tripping-line; topmast studding-sail down-haul; topmen up, to take in topgallant studding-sails," cried Modell. "Now, then, start the tack before the yard's down," cried he, ironically; "do, if you please, and snap the boom. Shorten sail!"

Away started the flapping canvass, and was got in very smartly. Pannikin gave a satisfied grunt; for it was perceptible that the "Braganza," Portugese frigate, was lying in the anchorage, with her great, gaudy stern blazing in the sun, beside one or two of our own ships; so it was advisable that the "Patagonian" should make a good appearance; and a gentleman, who unhappily finds his pantaloons yielding while he is in a quadrille, suffers lightly in comparison with a sensitive captain, who finds his ship disgrace herself in the eyes of a smart squadron. Poor Pannikin! he knew not what was impending.

The breeze blew; the sails bellied out gracefully. On flew the ship over the violet river; the sweet shrubs that grow on the banks, worthy of the golden reputation of the stream, offered up grateful incense to the coming children of the north; hill and valley, and woods of earth's fairest plumage, and fruits that hang like jewels on mother earth's fair neck, were around them; above, a smiling heaven; before, more and more distinct grew the town of Lisbon, stretching over rocky hills, with antique buildings, venerable by age, and gardens beautiful as youth.

The ship was going nine knots. The word was given to shorten sail; the fore-topsail, from some reason or other, stuck.

"Let go the halyards," roared Pannikin.

Now, Mr. Tressel on the forecastle hearing the words "let go," conceived that such a desperate roar could only mean let go the anchor; accordingly this was done. The ship was brought up suddenly; there was a desperate confusion. One fluke of the best bower-anchor was broken; there was delay, confusion, humiliation. Mr. Tressel was put under arrest; the effect of the *entrée* was destroyed; Pannikin was furious, and the "Patagonian" disgraced.

Why linger over the painful scene? Let us come down to the gunroom. Two hours have elapsed; the ship has been brought properly to an anchor, and all is over.

"I shall go on shore," said Clarion, "and visit the Aqueduct."

"I want to go to the Opera," said Somers. "Tadolini sings here, I dare say."

"I want to go to Cintra," said Lovell.
"I mean to visit the churches," said Plebbe.
"I want some ices," said Strawberry, with a sigh.
"I shall go and see the grave of Fielding," said Fontenoy.
"Bravo youngster," cried Bertie; "I will go with you. I swear by Tom Jones!"

CHAPTER IV.

Hinc exaudiri gemitus, et sæva sonare
Verbera: ÆNEID, vi. 557-8.

Man is a noble animal splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave.
SIR THOMAS BROWN.

THE "Patagonian" had left the Tagus; and passed the huge rock of Gibraltar, with its batteries lying like crouched lions at its feet; had gone through the Straits, and entered the Mediterranean. It was a fine morning. The sun was shining; the water smooth; the wind lively and fair—and there was a seaman going to be flogged. A picture of naval life would be incomplete without such a scene. And Britannia, in her character of ruler of the waves, ought to be painted with a "cat" in her hand. Who paints Tisiphone, except—

. . ultrix accincta flagello,*

as Virgil has it? Or who draws Discord, unless—

With bloody chaplets in her snaky hair!

after the same great master? Then, why paint Britannia without the proper accessories—if it be true, as was said by Napoleon (for which see Montholon's book), that her discipline afloat is only maintained by the "most barbarous terror?" I shall be told that the old system is altered and amended. My friends—read the life of Collingwood, and you will see that he maintained his ship in the most admirable order without a tithe of the flogging now carried on in any average vessel. And this was nearly half a century ago! What makes the difference? The difference is in the commanders! It is a known fact, that some officers can dispense with the lash altogether. The thing then *can* be done. Why is it not so, universally? Because the selection of officers is bad; because the education of officers is bad; because, if a man finds himself allowed to govern men as beasts, he will not take the trouble to try and govern them in

* ÆNEID. lib. vi. 570.

any other way. Under the existing system, the blood shed in flogging is offered up in honour of the stupidity and baseness of the captain who flogs—as much as was that of the young Spartans to the Diana Orthia!*

"Punishment at seven bells," said the quartermaster, coming down into the cockpit, about six in the morning.

"Hang punishment!" cried Somers.

"You think it wrong, eh?" asked Singleton, whose hammock was next his, and who was preparing to turn out.

"Very wrong, to rout me out this way, after I've had the middle watch!"

"I say—there's a fellow going to be flogged!" said Box, running up to Singleton's hammock, with an air of great curiosity.

"Well—so much the worse," said Singleton, peevishly. He was beginning to grow irritable, now and then, in spite of his good-nature.

"I think," said Lovell, philosophically, "that fellow made a point of getting flogged, because he knew I would be lazy this morning."

"They used to flog the youngsters when I joined the service," said Somers, looking at Box. Box grinned in a triumphant manner, and shook young Strawberry's hammock by the clews.

"Be quiet, Box," said Strawberry, drowsily.

"Come, rouse and bitt!" cried Box, who in a few weeks had mastered the slang of the service, and, I must also add, had really acquired a good deal of seamanship. "Rouse out—show a leg!"

"Ah, you youngsters ought to have been in the service when I joined," pursued Somers. "Youngsters, I tell you, were flogged then."

"Were you ever flogged?" asked Singleton, quietly.

"Well, upon my word! It's like your impudence to ask such a question."

"Why? You say you were a youngster, and that youngsters were flogged,"

"Well, my sea-lawyer," said Somers, sneeringly, "did I say I was one of them?"

"I see nothing in you to suppose that you were likely to be in any way superior to the general mob!" said Singleton, with a sarcastic sneer.

"I can tell you, my friend, that you stand a very good chance of being licked," said Somers, turning very red.

Singleton, who was washing at the moment, at his chest,

* See Plutarch's "Life of Lycurgus." (Langhorne's *Translation*), and note *in loc.*

looked up very quietly indeed, and continued, "Ah, you are right rather to trust to your ruffianism, than your arguments."

Somers advanced to him with a threatening look.

"Stop, my friend," said Singleton: "touch me, and I write for a Court of Inquiry."

There was a general laugh at this preposterous announcement from a youngster; but it luckily happened that old Bertie, who was also performing his ablutions at this time, came over to that part of the cockpit. Bertie, who could rarely manage without borrowing some toilet article or other, used to patronise Singleton in this way, and indeed rather liked him. So he interfered, and no further altercation took place.

Seven bells (half-past seven) came, and the hands were turned-up to attend punishment. The ship's company gathered together in the waist and gangways in dense masses, close up to the mainmast. The officers, with swords on, were on the quarter-deck. On the starboard side of the deck, just abaft the gangway, stood the apparatus of punishment: two capstan-bars secured against the bulwarks, with a grating between them, and a grating below, constituted the simple preparation. Near this was the master-at-arms, with a little cup of water for the benefit of the victim; and two boatswain's mates were in attendance, with canvass bags containing the implements of torture. Take away God's sky, and the free sea round about, and you might have fancied you were in the Inquisition chambers in their palmiest day!

"All ready, sir," said the master-at-arms to Commander Modell, who looked very gloomy and pensive.

Modell moved aft to the captain's cabin. There was a slight sensation among the crowd of seamen; the guard of marines on the poop fixed bayonets. Captain Pannikin came out of his cabin with his cocked hat and sword on, and moved forward with an awkward pomp to the scene. It would be ignorance of human nature to assert that it was cruelty on his part that made him flog: on the contrary, he was, in his way, a kind and well-meaning man. But he had no talent for governing a ship without it: he found it established as a system, and availed himself of it. He did not like it; but he thought no more of it than a butcher does of killing a calf.

The prisoner (Williams, a forecastle man) was one of those stolid, ruffianly fellows sometimes encountered at sea—thoroughly valuable sailors, but untameable—who will do any work, but who can with difficulty be subjected to any discipline; men who are constantly exposing themselves to being flogged, but whom it is no use flogging. On this occasion he had been drunk, and when similar temptation came in his way would get drunk again.

Love of a man like Nelson might have kept him dutiful: flogging he did not care for.

Captain Pannikin, as I said, came forward, and the prisoner was brought before him. Pannikin was very red, and felt it necessary to make some sort of speech. It was pitiable to hear the attempt: he stuttered, and stammered, and grew confused.

"Sorry to have to do it—very sorry—necessity—drunk—sorry—STRIP!"

The last word was said more clearly. Yet, such is the overwhelming force of circumstances, that the dread power which Pannikin was using at that moment saved his poor, paltry address from seeming contemptible!

"Strip!"

The prisoner stripped himself as coolly as a man going to bathe. His bust was a model for a bust of Hercules; he stepped with a free tread on the grating, and was firmly secured there, in the usual way.

The clerk, Mr. Snigg, handed Captain Pannikin the warrant and the article of war: the captain read them, and then motioned to the first boatswain's mate. This functionary stepped forward, and drew from the canvass bag his "cat"—rather a handsome implement—the tails brilliantly white—the handle neatly, and indeed fancifully, covered with green baize!

At this moment—it seems scarcely credible, but such is the fact—the facetious Snigg drew near Singleton, and whispered—

"That's what I call *letting the cat out of the bag.*"

Was this cruelty in Snigg?—Not so; it was another example of habit. He had made the same joke in many ships—particularly in the "Bustard," in the West Indies, Captain Poker, who flogged his men "on principle," and who had to make good, out of his pay, a deficit of a hundred gallons of the ship's rum, which he and Snigg (who was his acting purser) had consumed, by the time she was paid off, in addition to their regular allowance.

Singleton was very pale, and fumbled nervously with his dagger: he drew his breath involuntarily, as if the blow was to fall upon himself. There was a deep silence, which nothing disturbed but the low rumbling sound of the ship's wheel, turned by the helmsman.

A whistle—down came the lash; and on the fair white flesh dawned a row of delicate crimson lines.

"One," cried the master-at-arms.

Singleton gasped; but the man who received the blow betrayed no more emotion than if he had been made of granite.

"Two—three—four," and so on, were counted, up to "One dozen, sir."

The man's back, that had been like white marble, was now

like marble veined: it flushed with angry crimson. But he uttered no word—gave no symptom of feeling; till presently stoicism became anger.

"Go on—go on: you're a poor old fool. Your wife told me you was!"

"Whom do you speak to?" cried the captain.

"Any —— that chooses to take it up."

There was an uneasy feeling among the officers: it is always a very delicate question how to act with regard to words spoken by a man under punishment. Shall we deal judicially with what we wring from torture?—that would be *too* like the Inquisition!

The second boatswain's mate brought out a fresh cat, for the tails of the first hung clotted and bloody as a Fury's hair! This cat was adorned with red baize. A pleasing variety, and an artistic contrast!

The punishment went on: the man seemed about to roar out some new insolence, when there was a sudden confusion among the officers—a rush, a crowd, loud whispers.

"What is the matter?" said Captain Pannikin, in a low, eager voice, turning round

"Mr. Fontenoy has fainted, sir," said Commander Modell, in a whisper.

Singleton was carried down the companion ladder into Mr. Primby's cabin, which was nearly opposite the foot of it, on the main deck. As he opened his eyes, they lighted on a sweet face: for Primby, who, besides his affectations, had good feelings and a somewhat elegant taste, had a portrait of his sister there; and the sister was a very beautiful girl.

"Dear me—what a heavenly face!" said Singleton, waking up in a bewildered way, and staring at the drawing, without the smallest recollection of himself for an instant.

Primby, who had helped to carry him down, laughed, and sprinkled his face with some water.

Singleton came round, gave a slight sick shudder, and then jumped up, and thanked the lieutenant.

"Sit still, Mr. Fontenoy, for a few moments," said Primby, good-naturedly. "Punishment's over." The man, indeed, had been cast off, and sent to the sick bay, and thence to walk the poop, and air his bruised frame at his leisure. Singleton sat down accordingly, and a long conversation took place between him and Primby, which ended in a very friendly intimacy.

A few days passed, during which the man Williams, who had been flogged, was a "marked man." Toadyley, the mate of the upper deck, had "his eye on him," as he called it. Well might a poor fellow believe in the Evil-eye—that strange superstition—

who had to encounter the watching glance of Toadyley! Cunning and cruel—plausible and sycophantic—Toadyley was a valuable servant and a dangerous enemy. Williams did his work sullenly, and sometimes seemed to grow desperate. Singleton, who observed constantly the moral phenomena of the ship for purposes of study, wondered how this would end. There was a lesson in store for him.

One evening the hands were turned up, as usual, to "reef topsails," just after quarters. Captain Pannikin had dined, and, with a red face and bloated look, paced the poop, telescope in hand.

The word was given to take a reef in the foresail. A man ran up by the forestay, slipped as he reached the collar, and fell down on deck: he was picked up insensible, and carried down to the sick bay. It was soon known that there had been an accident all over the ship. Captain Pannikin gave a loud damn (it was his expression of sorrow and sympathy), and one of the forecastle men took a swab and swabbed up the blood. There was an emotion of terror, succeeded by a gloom, through the whole floating colony. The hands were piped down, and the watch called.

At nine that night Singleton went up on the main deck to take a walk. He saw a screen hung up between two of the guns. It formed a kind of cabin, and inside it gleamed the light of a lantern, which flickered and played over the white canvass with a ghastly yellow glare. A strange silent spot this, in the darkening shades of night! What holy mystery was here?

Singleton approached, and, moving one side of the screen gently, looked in. There lay a grating; on the grating, an object covered with a red ensign. There is a double symbolic value in that ensign of brave England! It floats over the warrior in victory, and it wraps him round in death! What a melancholy spectacle is that—the stiff, symmetrical form of manhood—when the man is gone!

As Singleton turned away, the sentry touched his arm, and said respectfully, "The screen must not be disturbed, sir!"

"Certainly not," said Singleton, in a low voice; "but, sentry, who is it dead?"

"Williams, the forecastle man," answered the sentry, "whom the fall happened to, sir."

Singleton walked quietly away, with his heart beginning to beat strangely; he reached the bow port, and sat down, and listened to the surging of the waters against the stem. The ship was sailing almost on the brilliant path of the moonlight, which stretched across the sea. A footway of sparkling gold, this, through the wide fields of ocean, and worthy (may we reverently

fancy) of being trod by the feet of Him who walked upon the waters!

There was a melancholy scorn in Singleton's heart, as he thought of what he had just seen and heard. What a wretched mockery of honour. While this poor fellow was a living soul—a miracle, breathing the breath of God—contempt and contumely were his portion, and his fare was ignominy and the lash! But now that the soul was gone, and only its poor "shell" left—when the Temple was ruined and the Divinity away—the poor body received most wonderful attention and respect! It is a type of the justice of the world!

I wonder how often what is called reverence for the dead is but a particular form of the poor survivor's fears of his own death? how often, I wonder, do we take for a ray of heaven what is nothing but an *ignis fatuus* from the grave!

The ship was hove to next evening, for the burial. With all honour the corpse was laid across the gangway on a grating. Was it the same grating at which the man had been flogged a week before?

Singleton wondered if it was, as he stood and watched the ceremony. The chaplain was there, reading the sublime words; the officers were uncovered; a flag was spread over the remains till the last moment; and the scene was lighted by all the splendour of the moon. All was silence, attention, and respect. Death had vindicated the sacredness of man. Satire has no place in such a scene; and Singleton no longer felt scornful, but only sad. There was a rattle and a hollow plunge, and the sea was in a moment silent, as became the grave.

"Watch, make sail! Main brace! Main tack and sheet! Haul away. Topgallant studding-sails ready for setting!" Let us be off from the bubbling spot.

The "Patagonian" arrived at Malta on August 1st, 1840.

CHAPTER V.

"I do not see why there should be an Eastern question," said Hillel Besso, with an epigrammatic air. TANCRED: or THE NEW CRUSADE.

ONE night after the arrival of the "Patagonian" in the Grand Harbour, a large party of naval, and a sprinkling of military men, were assembled in Mula's café, in the Strada Reale. It was the hottest period of the year. The door was opened wide, that the languid air might find a hearty welcome. When one

has lived in hot climates, one begins to understand why the Greeks built a Temple of the Winds; and when one begins to understand, one ceases to sneer. The room was papered in a very ugly style—in compliment to the English, who patronized it! The designer of this graceful tapestry had evidently wished to flatter us, as a sporting nation. It represented a stag hunt. The huntsmen wore the orthodox top-boots, and carried huge whips. They were leaping high gates, and struggling in impassable fences. At one end was represented the catastrophe. A man with a large weapon was cutting the stag's throat ferociously.

The frequenters of the café were seated at neat little tables of mahogany—some of marble. Ices of all colours were much in vogue, pale lemon and rich red preponderating. A thin haze of cigar-smoke curled in blue rings along the roof. Some gentlemen were sipping coffee, and some were colouring their lemonade with the aid of brandy.

"Indeed," said Lord Clarion, in reply to a rather energetic sentence from a young officer, whose small, round waist was girt by a scarlet sash, which, falling over his brilliantly white trowsers, made his appearance somewhat picturesque. "You think these eastern difficulties will end in a European war?"

"Yes; all our fellows think so. Thiers is warlike by nature. There is a strong war party in France, and their fleet, I hear, was never in better order."

"Ah! But there have been so many false war-alarms."

"True. Yet there must be war some time, and this eastern question is a crisis."

"What is the eastern question?" asked a young artillery officer, somewhat affectedly.

"What, Charley, you want to puzzle us by the interrogatory plan? You must know, Clarion, he is a great theorist. He has a project for settling the eastern difficulty by making Lamartine king of Syria."

"And giving the kingdom of Greece to Ben Disraeli," added the artillery officer, seriously. He was of a speculative turn, and had nothing to do all the year round, except occasionally to fire cannon at a target from Fort Ricasoli; so he dabbled in speculation with most singular results.

"Where is the admiral?" asked Clarion.

"I believe he's *en route* to Alexandria. The commodore's at Beyrout, in his ship, the 'Powerful," answered a lieutenant of the "Jupiter," a line-of-battle ship then in the harbour. "Suleiman Pasha's in command at Beyrout with ten thousand troops, and Ibrahim Pasha and the Emir Beschir are in the

neighbourhood. We will all be off soon, depend on it. Won't there be fighting!"

"Fee-fa-fum!" cried Snigg, from a neighbonring table, where he had planted himself with some brandy-and.water, "I smell the blood of an Egyptian man."

The military officer who had spoken first (Bechamel, of a regiment stationed in the island) looked round, rather haughtily, at these extraordinary sounds.

"Will you fight, Snigg?" asked Somers, who was smoking a cigar.

"I'll do anything if I am paid for it," answered Snigg, philosophically. "What a lot of our fellows will be killed in Syria, without knowing what they are fighting about."

"We must put down Mehemet Ali," said a second master, looking round for applause.

"I should like to have one of his pipes," said a midshipman. "Will there be any plunder?"

Bechamel rose, and Lord Clarion went out with him. The remainder of the officers drew near each other, and went on talking about the squadron and the impending war. Snigg established himself with a number of youngsters round him. He delighted to be king among a group of admiring boys, to study their characters, and would even make them tipsy, that he might do so to advantage. Snigg had very good talents and qualities; but as the constant dropping of water will wear away stone, what cannot a constant succession of drops of rum-and-water effect in the same way?

"I say Mehemet Ali must be put down," said the second master again, striking the table emphatically.

"Poor old gentleman," said Snigg, ironically; "what has he done?"

"He poisoned a man with coffee, once," said the second master.

"By Jove, I think Mula has been taking a hint from him then," said Snigg, "for his coffee is execrable. Do you hear that, Mula? Bring me some lemonade, and a little brandy in it; or, on second thoughts, Mula, never mind the lemonade. Bring the brandy by itself." A general laugh followed this characteristic speech.

"Well, I shall be sorry to leave Malta," said Box, pensively.

"Malta's an interesting island," said Lovell, with a spoony look.

"St. Paul was shipwrecked here," added the second master, with an erudite air.

"Yes," struck in Snigg, brandishing his spoon, "and almost the first things he came across were a bundle of sticks with a

viper inside them—doosed emblematic of the society!" And Snigg laughed cheerfully.

"Did you ever dine with the Capuchins?" asked Somers of Lovell.

"No."

"Ah, then you have a treat to come, if they choose to ask you They give the best feeds in the island."

"What an excellent body of men!" said Snigg, piously.

At this moment there was a new arrival. It was a midshipman belonging to one of the ships in the harbour. He had his sword on, and he appeared somewhat flurried. Glancing hastily round the room, his eye lighted on Somers. He bowed.

"You belong to the 'Patagonian,' I believe?"

"Yes," said Somers.

"The steamer has come in from Alexandria with despatches. There has been a signal made to you from the Palace to prepare for sea."

Three or four of the "Patagonian's" fellows jumped up; the midshipman only waited to swallow some wine-and-water, and then hastened away.

"I suppose we had better go on board, eh?" said Somers, looking round.

"She can't sail till the morning, surely."

"Mula, how's the wind?" cried out Snigg, with a thick voice. Come here, waiter,—how's the wind, eh?"

"How I know, sar?" asked the waiter, a dignified Maltese, sharply.

"Silence, *zanzir*,"* said Snigg, who had been out on the Mediterranean station before, and knew just enough Maltese to be able to abuse the natives a little.

"We can't sail without wind," said Snigg, looking round, stupidly.

"There is a steamer in the harbour. She will tow us out."

"We had better go," said Lovell, rising and putting on his cap.

"Come along, Silenus," said Somers to Snigg.

"Silenus always had an ass with him, so I will go with you," returned Snigg, who was never without a retort.

"Let us have some beccaficos and champagne," cried Hillerton, of the "Jupiter," coming in. He had just won five pounds at billiards in Stradi Forni, and was in high good-humour.

"I will join you," said a little fellow, called Pug Welby. "You poor Patagonians are going to sea; I pity you."

* Pig.

"*Partant pour la Syrie,*" sang out Hillerton, gaily.

"Ah," said Pug Welby; "war is a bore."

"Thank God, the 'Jupiter' sails very fast, and can run away if need be," said Hillerton, facetiously.

The Patagonians dared stay no longer, so they all sallied out, and passing down Strada San Giovanni, and so on down Nix Mangiare, and through the Lascaris', soon reached a boat and went off. At daylight the "Patagonian" was towed out. The wind was westerly, and she started for Syria.

The "Patagonian" went to take her share in that war which terminated in the reduction of Mehemet Ali to his obedience to the Sublime Porte; or, in other words, in the submission of the greatest man that the East has produced since Solyman the Magnificent, to the sway of an effete government. If hero-worship be true, it was false, and unless human nature change, it will be regretted.

From 1806, when Mehemet won by his genius the Pashalik of Egypt, to the year in which this war was perpetrated, the country developed and improved, as only countries do under the supreme dominion of a great man. Gravity is not more decidedly the one mighty law of the physical, than the influence of individual character is of the moral world. No matter what the age or the circumstances. It was a man that made Russia an empire, and a man that made Prussia a camp. Artificial as is the mechanism of the British Constitution, England at its best periods has always been governed by some one great individual. I need only mention the name of Cromwell: but look at the last century. In its palmiest years, was it not the name and brain of Chatham that ruled England—three estates and all?

To Egypt, Mehemet Ali was a second Nile! He had certainly some terrible work to do. He came down—as Mr. Carlyle finely says of Cromwell—"like the hammer of Thor." How he destroyed the Mamelukes, all men know. But though the East is proverbially the land of roses, nothing greater can be accomplished with rosewater there than elsewhere!

The Porte watched his progress. They saw his revenues increasing. Improvement suggested nothing to them but increased tribute, and the sultan demanded more "purses" with the coolness of a highwayman. Alas for the "Asian Mystery." The East is an enchanted land only in romance. We find on inquiring into its politics, often nothing better than dull imitations of European cunning and meanness. We find ourselves face to face with Downing Street in a turban, windbags smoking a chibouque, and snobs dominant in a divan.

Mehemet seized Syria, and probably might have seized Stam-

boul. But now the "balance of power" required that the allies should take up the cause of the Porte. What is this balance of power? It is neutralisation of power! It is a propping up of two swords against each other, making both useless. It is an organised impotence. It keeps the East compulsorily stagnant, by preventing its development through the agency of such men as Mehemet. This Libra of the political zodiac, in fact, is a coward's farce. It creates the difficulty of which its supporters are everywhere begging the solution. Well, Mehemet Ali was checked in 1840. What has been gained by it? Syria has gained nothing, and most certainly not Egypt. And how stands the great question, that of Russia's position with regard to the Porte? Does or does not the day draw nearer, which shall see the eagle floating on the Bosphorus, and when a Sclavonian shall blaspheme Mahomet in the proudest of his temples?

In 1840, we went vigorously to work. It was a grand, Common-place Crusade. We had marines eating beef in Sidon, and we inundated Lebanon with second-hand Birmingham muskets. We frightened merchants, destroyed mulberry-trees, and killed camels. The Syrian war is a most memorable example of the employment of brute force, and the triumph of sheer material strength, that modern times can furnish. A sad want of dignity attends its history. Its operations were complicated by discordant orders, disgraced by petty jealousies between the commanders, and chronicled in despatches redolent of slang. In a word, we did not conquer the great Pasha, we *thrashed* him.

I do not admire the plan of disposing of the East "on the allotment system," as it may be called, propounded by Louis Blanc in his "Ten Years." But when I think of some of our political operations, I heartily concur with that celebrated writer, in his contempt for those who, as he says, "think that they are practical, because they are mediocre."

And now to resume my story,

. . nunc horrentia Martis!

as friend Virgil hath it.

CHAPTER VI.

Bellum scripturus sum———

SALLUST, *Bell. Jug.*

"LAND, ahead," cried the look-out man just after daylight, one morning.

"Mr. Fontenoy, go up to the masthead, and take a look at it," said Lieutenant Primby.

Fontenoy seized his Dollond, hung it round him by the strap, and rushed away forward. Lord Clarion, who had charge of the forecastle in the same watch, was regaling himself with a cup of ship's cocoa on the booms. And he might have had a worse beverage at that hour.

"Ah, good morning, Fontenoy," he said. "You will have the first peep at Syria." Fontenoy skipped up the Jacob's ladder, and was soon running up the fore-rigging. When he reached the cross-trees, he found the look-out man comfortably seated on the fore-topsail yard, with his legs dangling down.

"There's land, sir," said the man, pointing forward to the horizon. Singleton rested the glass on the yard in as convenient a position as he could command. Yes!—there was land, sure enough. A line of white mountains, barren and stony, was rising out of the blue horizon like an enchanted castle. Lebanon, by Jove! And the sun was tinging its summit as it rose, too. Singleton took a long, deep glance at it, and thought of Lalla Rookh.

"That's land, sir, eh?" said the look-out man.

"No mistake about that," said Singleton, gaily. So saying, he put the glass over his neck again, and with an impulse of playfulness (for it was a delicious morning, and his blood was as lively as the quicksilver in a thermometer) he got on the foot-rope of the yard, and leaning over it, gazed far over the horizon. Day was dawning, clearer and clearer, over the sea, which was rolling in long, unbroken blue waves. The wind was setting in towards the coast, and the ship was running steadily along before it with the yards square. Singleton bent over the yard. The fore-topsail bellied steadily out underneath him, and the reef-points on it were dangling as merrily in the wind as a girl's ringlets!

Perhaps it was this fancy that completed Singleton's happiness. More gaily than ever he moved out towards the yard-arm, and gazed abstractedly before him once more.

In a few moments he felt the topgallant-sail shake, and heard the boatswain's mate's pipe ring shrilly on deck.

"Hold on, sir," cried the look-out man, suddenly. Singleton's heart gave a desperate throb, as he felt the yard start. The braces were in motion, as the sails were being trimmed. Singleton did hold on with desperate tenacity. The look-out man bellowed to the people on deck. The braces were made fast for a moment, and my hero "laid in," and got upon the topmast-rigging with remarkable alacrity. The ideal tendencies are confoundedly dangerous aloft!

He came down on deck, and reported to Primby, who laughed at the adventure which he had just had, and offered him some coffee. Primby always had a good "watch-stock" in his watch, and one night, when he was in the "Pelham," in the West Indies, he gave a kind of supper to the fellows in his watch at about two o'clock in the morning, which terminated curiously enough. The tray was placed near the hatchway, well covered with provisions, and they were all pitching into them, when a noise was heard which made them start like the mice in Horace's fable:—

> . . . quum subito ingens
> Valvarum strepitus lectis excussit utrumque.*

In fact, the admiral, that great man, Sir Booby Booing, was astir! In a minute or two they heard a step on the companion-ladder, as he hobbled up. There was nothing for it; they tilted the tray over the combings of the hatchway! It thundered down below, smashing the china plates with the mess-arms on them, and all the apparatus of that feast When the admiral reached the deck, he found the officers of the watch walking about in the most regular manner.

At four bells (six o'clock) Captain Pannikin emerged from his cabin, enveloped in a huge blue pilot-coat; he nodded sulkily in return to Primby's salute.

"Lash up hammocks, Mr. Primby."

The order was given, and the men began to "take up their beds and walk," as Mr. Bagg, the boatswain, who was a profane old rascal, used to shout out to them. As the "Patagonian" drew near the land, the Bay of Beyrout was seen swarming with vessels. Up went the "Patagonian's" number, and shortly afterwards she saluted the commodore, whose blue burgee floated from the "Powerful." The signal-officer was on the forecastle, when three balls were seen flying up to the "Powerful's" mast-head. They broke, and as the grub bursts into a butterfly, broke into bright flags!

"Bring the signal-book," shouted Lovell, who was signal-officer. The man came running up with it. Captain Pannikin stood by, anxiously.

"Well, Mr. Lovell?"

Lovell gave a long thirsty look.—"3—2—"

"Well, sir, well?"

"Reconnoitre," cried Lovell.—Captain Pannikin was intensely excited.

"Sail to windward," shouted the look-out-man.

* SAT. LIB. ii. 6.

"Fleet to windward," cried Lovell, almost at the same moment, interpreting the bright symbols.

The captain stamped on the deck with rage. "By G—— it's too bad. Call down the look-out man and put him in irons; we ought to have seen them half an hour ago.—Turn the hands up!"

Out came Mr. Bagg's call. Mr. Bagg had been too long at sea to be excited at anything, so as he saw the captain go fuming aft, he only winked his eye, and muttered something about "a bear with a sore head." Then his pipe thrilled the decks, and the hatches began to vomit up the men,—it is not a pleasant metaphor, but it hits the thing,—with the utmost violence.

In came the studding-sails. The "Patagonian" hauled her wind, which was now rising fast, and laid her head towards the horizon. Again the vision of Beyrout began to grow dim, but what a sight there was to windward! Like the spires of a great town seen from some distant spot, rose tall masts from the sea!

Now, at this time, a war with France was daily expected. The French had a squadron of some twenty ships not far from Beyrout. Had they descended as enemies on that bay ten days before Beyrout was attacked, and our force landed, they would have found an enemy only a third of their number. What would have been the result? This I will say, that if any man living could have fought them under such circumstances, Commodore Napier was that man. But I decline to speculate any further!

Captain Pannikin, of course, not knowing what this fleet was, thought it safest to clear for action, and gave the order with a great deal of gusto. Indeed, there can be no doubt, that he would not have stuck for an instant at bombarding anything that ever floated, from Noah's Ark down to the Gomer.

But as the "Patagonian" drew nearer with all her men at quarters, and the guns loaded, Pannikin armed with his sword, to say nothing of Fontenoy with his dirk, which was not the least imposing spectacle of the day!—the fleet turned out to be gallant old Stopford with his reinforcement, and some Turkish ships. The order was given to "secure the guns," which the men did with some grumbling, particularly as old Bertie, mate of the lower deck, had, under pretence that there was going to be a desperate action, thrown overboard a quantity of their plates and furniture which took up an unnecessary degree of room!

The "Patagonian" exchanged signals, and bore up once more for Beyrout with the new squadron. What a magnificent

spectacle it was. There went the stately "Princess Charlotte," leading the way like a queen! Lofty line-of-battle ships attended her like barons bold. The Turkish ships with the crescent flying, and their gaudy sterns shining in the sunlight, sailed steadily along in company. And there was also near, the graceful and brilliant corvette "Dido," as beautiful as a nereid, worthy to have borne Cleopatra,—a fairy of the sea! For, of the creations of Sir William Symonds, this must be admitted (whatever be denied) that Ocean never bore more *beautiful* vessels. No man with a spark of fancy but must be charmed with his beautiful brigs particularly, whether in calm they glide along the surface, sweetly and tranquilly as the nautilus,—or in storm, dashing through the waters, they recall the flight of the dove, that bore the olive-leaf of old!

In the afternoon, the squadron anchored in the Bay of Beyrout, and exchanged salutes. How black and funereal looked the old castle; how sunny the distant Lebanon! The country was gay with colour. It seemed as though it had gained by a charm the power of the prism, and split every ray from that glorious sun into separate gorgeous hues. The bay was exquisitely calm. And prettily lay among the large ships, fishing-boats of the coast with their long yards and high prows.

"Mr. Fontenoy, do you see that line-of-battle ship lying inside, with her broadside on to the town?" said Commander Modell, about three o'clock.

"What, the dirty one, sir," said Singleton, ingenuously.

Modell smiled. "Hush, Mr. Fontenoy; you speak too plainly, young gentleman. Remember, midshipmen and youngsters are never allowed to express opinions. You have no right to think."

Singleton looked up in surprise, and grinned.

"Go on board her, sir," said Modell, with a severe look, "to copy an order."

Away went Singleton in the first cutter, and reached the line-of-battle ship in question. She was a dirty one, beyond the possibility of doubt, and Singleton, as he went on board, wondered whether her officers were allowed to smell, or whether that sense was *défendu*, as well as common sense generally. He found a number of youngsters assembled at a wooden table on her main-deck, copying an order into their order-books. There was a most deficient supply of pens and ink, and a lively conversation going on, besides, so that the said copying was no easy operation. Singleton secured a stump of pen, however, and by dint of dipping over a midshipman's shoulder, and progging him in the right ear, now and then, by accident, got a little ink, and began the task.

"I say," said a fellow from the "Ganges," "the marines land to-night."

"Do they, though; what fun!"

"We've got lots of shells ready," said a little boy, from a war-steamer. "We'll give it them!" The speaker could not have lifted a thirty-two pound shot if he had been offered its weight in gold.

"I've got such a beautiful nargilly," said a youngster, looking up from his writing, which he appeared to find an arduous task.

"What, a hubble-bubble?" said another, using the more familiar name.

"Yes. The Turk I bought it of says it belonged to a pasha."

"Very likely," said a midshipman, rather drily.

"It's hard to draw!" said the youngster, with a touching sigh.

"How the blazes do you spell 'precipitate?'" asked an Irish youngster, eagerly, which caused a general laugh. Here, the officer of the watch sent down to the main deck, for these gentlemen to make less noise.

Singleton having copied the order, went on deck, and ordered his boat to be called alongside. While waiting for it, he saw a figure emerge from the cabin, under the poop. There was a sensation on deck, and my hero perceived at once that the figure was that of a Great Man.

He was dressed in a rather seedy uniform, and had an awkward stoop; his face was eccentric, but expressed power. He crossed his hands behind his back, and began to pace the deck, with a gait that was as remarkable as everything else about him. It was Benbow, with a dash of Grimaldi!

The "Patagonian's" cutter was just coming alongside for Fontenoy, when a small gig shot between her and the ship's side. A young man about twenty ran up, and came on deck: he was in the uniform of a mate, but had a straw hat on, with the word "Viper" upon the black ribbon, in gold letters; his face was most remarkable for its grave beauty, its serenity, and its power; and Singleton felt an interest awakened by him, such as he had not experienced for many a long day. His eye dwelt upon him anxiously, as he accosted the officer of the watch. He perceived that, though what he said influenced that gentleman obviously, yet that some difficulty prevented their conversation from being satisfactory.

"Who is he? what does he want?" asked the Great Man, stopping abruptly, and taking a pinch of snuff.

"Officer from the brig 'Viper,' sir," said the lieutenant of the watch, touching his hat, "come to speak about the stores for the Alexandrian squadron." The Great Man fixed his eye on him, looked at him, from top to toe, inquiringly, and then said, in his peculiar accent,—

"Wall, sir; what is it? Speak oot."

The young man bowed very formally and gracefully.

"I have the honour, sir," he said, "to bear a message from my commander,—Commander Tinsley, of the 'Viper;' he desires me most respectfully to submit, that the size of the vessel makes it impossible for us to carry the stores in question. We have not room, sir." Here the young man bowed again, and Singleton thought he had never seen so much manly courtesy, or so fine a bearing.

The Great Man very deliberately pulled out his snuff-box, supplied his nose, and powdered his coat as usual. Then he looked again at the speaker, from top to toe, inquiringly, and spoke as follows:—

"Wall, sir; ye will go baack to the 'Viper,' and ye will see Commander Tinsley, and ye will tall him ye have seen me. And ye will tall him that I oerder him to take these stores on board! And ye wull tall him, that if he has no got room in the lower deck, he must put them on the upper deck; and that if he has no got room on the upper deck, he must fill his cabin with them. And he must stow them in bulk in the cot where he sleeps. For I am daammed" (this was said with a wonderful broad effect) "if they shall not go!"

As he concluded, the Great Man glanced to see the effect this speech had on some of his crew, who were gathered near the main bitts; for he was not above courting popularity in various ways, this Great Man!

The young officer of the "Viper" bowed, as pleasantly as if he had been bowing in a ball-room, in reply to this address, and moved to the gangway to regain his boat. Singleton was near there as he passed, and was again impressed by his face. It had so much serenity and power.

They were near each other for a moment. Perhaps it was the curiosity in Singleton's intellectual countenance that arrested the stranger's attention. He looked at him earnestly. Singleton felt impelled to speak to him. The man who has never experienced that impulse by which we seek the friendship of a stranger from some undefinable attraction—as inexplicable as the influence of flowers or stars, yet quite as certain—is himself a stranger to true friendship, and still ignorant of the alphabet of God!

"That was a strange speech you have just heard," said Singleton, as the stranger paused an instant on the gangway.

The stranger looked at him. "Do you see my boat? It has an ensign in it. It is a piece of vulgar, ragged bunting—but all the world honours it. Such is the force of symbols!"

He spoke, and ran rapidly down, and sprang into his gig. In a moment, she was skimming away.

Singleton followed, and presently gained his ship. A signal had made all the squadron alert. The marines were in heavy marching order, and it was known that a landing was to be effected. The town swarmed with soldiers, whose heads peeped every now and then out, in various places, and the gleam of whose bayonets shone occasionally behind wall and rock.

Evening was coming on. The purple twilight was coming. The air began to grow fresher and sweeter. There was a rolling sound—a volume of white smoke. The "Cyclops" was beginning to throw shells! Hissing through the air went the shells—death sleeping within them, till his proper hour. On rough rocks—on fresh green patches, such as the camel loves—on walls—and amidst green trees—fell the shells. The Arnaut is fierce; but who can stand against the fatal ball that has a terrible death sleeping in its bosom, as poison lies in a cup?

Dusk came on. The marines, and heavy, swarthy Turkish troops embarked on board the steamers. There was a cape of land to the south-west. The brilliant "Dido" glided in, very fair and very terrible, within a few hundred yards of the rocks; with her, the little "Wasp," small, but deadly as a scorpion.

Dusk became night. Lebanon retired behind the veil of darkness, and was no longer seen. The lofty figures of the men-of-war looked gloomier and gloomier; but here and there gleamed lanterns, just as you can fancy fireflies gleaming in a cypress grove.

Slowly rose the moon—a well of gold in the heavenly desert! The light fell everywhere. It enamelled the old castle; it rested like a smile on the face of the sleeping town. It made the rocks of the cape visible, and there were seen the enemy gathering on it, and taking up a position, to resist the landing that was to take place when to-morrow's sun rose.

Day came. The enemy were intrenched on the cape. The steamers, loaded with soldiers, were near it, and hovering ready to send them to the attack. The fleet weighed, and spreading out, as a huge bird spreads its wings, formed a line.

The "Benbow" drew in to the cape, and began to throw shells. The enemy clustered behind rocks and walls. The shells fell in among them, and scattered destruction everywhere. Death was playing at Proteus. There was slaughter everywhere. But still they rallied; still they prepared to resist a landing.

Suddenly, up flies a signal! Away go the steamers with their load of marines! Away goes the "Castor,"—away goes the splendid "Pique," brilliant "Dido," deadly "Wasp!" The blue bay gleams with the white sails of the flying ships—and the wind carries the seeds of death elsewhere. 'Tis the catastrophe of Camacho's Wedding over again. "A miracle—a miracle! No; a stratagem—a stratagem!"

Without opposition, by this device, the forces were safely landed at Djouni and Dog River, and the English flag hoisted on Lebanon.

In the evening, the "Patagonian's" mess were discussing the events of the last twenty-four hours, and the prospects of the war.

"It was certainly ingenious to persuade the enemy that we were going to land on that cape, and then to dart across the bay, eh?" said Somers.

"Not much in it," growled Bertie.

"It was a happy feint," said Lovell, with his spoony look.

"It was a capital dodge," shouted Box.

"It was an admirable stratagem," said Toadyley, who admired everything done by the authorities, and who would eat any amount of dirt, provided it was served in gold or china.

"Box has defined it best," said Lord Clarion, looking up from a recent number of "Blackwood's Magazine;" "it was a capital *dodge!*"

CHAPTER VII.

The East is a Career.—Tancred; or The New Crusade. ("Sidonia," *log.*)

The war progresses. The stern old Mehemit sits in his divan in Alexandria, and plucks with nervous fingers his white silvery beard. Suleiman Pasha—Frenchman and Turk—is with his troops at Beyrout. Fierce Ibrahim hovers with his forces near the outposts of the camp of the Allies. With him is the grave and artful Emir Beschir, grown grey in strategy, and even now meditating one treason more. Brisk steamers are running up and down the coast, distributing muskets and proclamations among the mountaineers. The English, Turkish, and Austrians are encamped at Djouni. The blue burgee of the Commodore floats there; and near it, the crescent of Selim Pasha waves gaily over his green tent.

About the middle of September, the "Patagonian" was lying with some other ships at Beyrout. The rest of the squadron were in Djouni Bay. The "Patagonian's" gunroom mess were at breakfast, at eight on a lovely morning. A delicious ripple curled the waters, and the breeze was heartily welcome. Curious little vases of porous clay hung full of water in the ports to cool. Oh! how heartily welcome were the breeze and the ripple! Heat, heat—nothing but heat! The country was gay and gaudy with colour, but it wearied the eye. It had the

sickly fascination of the blazing hues of a snake. From the gunroom ports a white cord might be seen stretching down into the sea. At the bottom hung bottles of wine, lowered down there to cool, where the fiercest sun could not penetrate.

The mess were mostly in their shirt sleeves, or in white jackets. Round, spongy, porous loaves of dark-hued bread were lying on the table. The butter was quite liquid, and reduced to a bright yellow oil. The tea had been made hours ago, and was drunk cold. The staple article was the grape. Every man had a large bunch of grapes, and was sousing them in his tumbler of water. A langour pervaded the assembly. It was an atmosphere of yawns and sighs. Several fellows were leaning back in their chairs, lazily eating grapes, and watching the crawling of a couple of chameleons that somebody had introduced, which used to drag themselves slowly along the brass rod that crossed the room for the lamps to hang on. Curious little creatures, these famous animals, with triangular heads and long, bony ridges of back, and arrowy tongues that dart like light. They were of a shaded green colour, and their hues did vary slightly now and then, in a curious dawning way.

"By Jove," cried Box, who had been watching one of them full half an hour, "he's got another fly!" For the chameleon had darted his tongue out, and secured one most skilfully. He no more lived on air than fine ladies and poetesses do!

"Has he?" yawned Lovell. "By Jove, I envy him his appetite!" Lovell said this with such a woe-begone look, that everybody laughed.

"Why, Strawberry, what's the matter with your arm?" The poor little noble had his left arm wrapped round with linen, and bore it in a sling.

"The prickly heat," said Strawberry, ruefully.

"Show, show," cried one or two. Strawberry removed the linen. His poor little arm was as red as beef. Reader, do you know what "prickly heat" is? The torment of torments! An agonizing sensation as from a myriad of needles, or an army of Lilliputian arrows. It murders sleep most cruelly.

"Poor boy," said Lord Clarion.

"Poor boy," sneered the manly Box, who had constitutionally no sympathy with pain.

Strawberry panted, and wrapped up his arm again, and lay down on the lockers.

"I wonder if my Sauterne's cool yet," said Snigg, who was so eager to know, that he used to keep pulling up the cord every ten minutes and looking at it, and thus preventing its getting cool at all. As he spoke he advanced to the port once more, and

pulled up the cord. Presently there was a roar of laughter through the mess, as the wet cord appeared with only the neck of the bottle on it. It had been unfortunately broken below,—goodness only knows how,—perhaps by knocking against the barnacles on the ship's bottom;—perhaps it had been consumed by some shark, gifted with that very common thing, a taste for other people's wine.

"Well, I'm d——d," said Snigg, looking with a facetious sorrow at the neck. "It serves me right for deserting rum, my proper tipple. Boy, the amber fluid!" Here Mr. Snigg mixed himself some swizzle and consoled himself.

The breakfast things were cleared away. The mess were left to amuse themselves for the forenoon. Somers and Lovell sat down to a highly intellectual and exciting game, which ought to be more generally known,—"Fly Loo." It has the advantage of extreme simplicity, and is suited (perhaps I should say, best suited) to the "meanest capacity." The players each take a piece of lump-sugar, and place it on the table; on whoever's lump a fly first lights, he wins the stake! Behold a beautiful game! Somers and Lovell watched the flies for some time, and finally Somers lost a bottle of Marsala, and they made it into sangaree, and sat down to drink it.

"Do you know," said Somers, turning round to Clarion, "they say the camp will have a skirmish with Ibrahim's men soon. The commodore will have a brush——"

"I'm hanged," broke in that wag Snigg, "if he had not better get a comb as well!"

This allusion to certain personal characteristics of the Great Man was received with a loud laugh, and no doubt the conversation would have become more lively, but a gun thundered from the main-deck, which showed that the firing at the town was resumed. The firing had become by this time a kind of target-practice on a large scale, and Commander Modell used to signalize himself by picking off stray fellows on shore with a main-deck thirty-two, very neatly and creditably indeed! The mess now went, most of them, to see the firing, and indeed it was very pretty sport, and perhaps not the less so, that the game was man. A taste for blood is acquired just like a taste for caviare or olives; and Box, who fired a gun one day, by dint of persuading the captain of it with a glass of grog to let him, came screaming into the mess, that he had killed an Albanian, in a state of unparalleled ecstacy.

This morning a signal was made for the "Patagonian's" captain, and Captain Pannikin having gone to answer it, returned on board with a look of great importance, and ordered Modell to "pass the messenger." At two P.M., the ship weighed, and

left Beyrout. A breeze had sprung up, and her huge sails filled merrily. There was considerable excitement felt among the officers touching her destination. Was it Cyprus? Was it Alexandria?

Northward, ho! was the destination. The "Patagonian" passed along the coast beyond Tripoli to Tortosa. This was a town of considerable importance to the Egyptians, particularly as a place full of provisions, and it was resolved to attack it. The "Patagonian" was obliged to anchor two miles off, in consequence of a large shoal. This extended in front of the town, and the water above it was more blue and beautiful where the danger lay.

As the "Patagonian" came to an anchor, she was joined by two other ships. Of these, one was a small and active frigate, the "Rover," the other was a ten-gun brig. Singleton was standing on the poop as the brig beat up. She was a wonderful little craft, with a black hull and red ports, which glared in contrast. Her masts towered to an enormous height for her size. Her square mainsail spread out broad and wide. All her sails were beautifully white, and indicated that her commanding officer had a dandiacal habit of scrubbing them. She tacked brilliantly.

"That's a pretty brig, quartermaster," said Singleton.

"That's the little 'Viper,' sir."

"The 'Viper,' eh?" Singleton thought of the young mate belonging to her, whom he had seen a few weeks before, on board the line-of-battle ship. He fancied that he could be happy on board such a pretty little craft with such a friend.

Again the "Viper" tacked. She worked her sails as beautifully as a girl manœuvring a parasol. And now she lay on the larboard tack nearly up for the "Patagonian's" stern. A gust of wind came down from the coast; she heeled over gracefully. That square mainsail seemed large enough to drag her to the devil, but it only made her rush forward faster, and scatter the white foam from her bow. Her boom-mainsail, too, was enormous, but it only urged her flight.

On she came. It seemed that she would run into the line-of-battle-ship's quarter. Singleton was in intense suspense. The brig came close by the stern of the "Patagonian." All her sails shook and trembled as the huge hull took the wind out of them. Singleton lent over the taffrail. The stranger was standing on a carronade-slide. He raised his straw-hat; Singleton cordially waved his hand. She was away.

"Hands out launch," resounded through the ship. A dozen hands jumped into the huge boat on the booms to get her ready. Cumbrous tackles were hoisted; smart men ran along the fore and main yards. Out went the barge and pinnace first, then the

tackles were made fast to the launch. The band struck up "Nancy Dawson;" the men stamped; the boatswain's mates piped shrilly; the huge boat was raised, and lowered into the sea with a deep splash. Then "Away there, launch's crew," was piped, and they occupied themselves in getting her carronade into her. Meanwhile, the "Rover" and "Viper" ran near in to the walls of the town. It was decided that the attack should take place next day, and an officer was sent with orders to the "Rover," round which the boats composing the attack were to assemble. Sunset came, muskets were fired, and the flags hauled down as usual.

In the gunroom, shortly after that, many of the mess were assembled. The lamps were lighted, and the rum placed on the table. Singleton was reading. The door opened. In came old Bertie, with a cutlass in his hand: his scanty, long, thin hair looked wilder than usual; his bloodshot eyes were fierce, and a curious expression of maudlin excitement lighted up his face.

"Hah, my noble Bertie!" cried Snigg, who was "mixing" with his usual activity. "Sword in hand, eh? Why, what are you doing with a cutlass?"

"I go in the launch to-morrow," said Bertie, "and my cussed sword's no use; so I've taken a ship's cutlass, and got the armourer to touch it up." So saying, he inspected the weapon under the lamp. Then he looked round. "I've got to take a youngster," he said.

"Take me!" shouted Box.

Singleton looked up from his book. "Take me, Bertie," he said, by a sudden impulse.

"Toss up for it," said Bertie.

Singleton took a dollar out of his pocket, and Box came eagerly up to him.

"The cap of liberty is tail," said Box. "You toss; I cry."

Up spun the bright coin. "Head!" cried Box. Down it came with a ring on the table. It was "tail." Box was very melancholy.

"You go then, Fontenoy," said Bertie. Fontenoy went down and brought his pistols up, and began cleaning them, and looking at them with a justifiable pride. They were very handsome.

"Leave me these," said Snigg, laughing, "if you're killed.

"I'll stand a bottle of champagne now!" cried Somers, "and you shall leave them to me. Come, that's a fair offer."

"It would be tempting Fortune and provoking Nemesis," said Singleton.

"Est vehemens Dea; lædere hanc caveto,

as Catullus says."

"D—n Catullus," said Somers. "Steward, bring a bottle of champagne." So Fontenoy made no objection, and the agreement was completed, and the wine brought. Indeed, it was a very good bargain for him, as matters looked then, though this attack on Tortosa proved a much more dangerous and disastrous affair than was ever expected.

Morning came—a lovely Eastern morning—and disclosed the "Rover" and "Viper" lying at anchor about six hundred yards from the town. The sun shone full upon the white wall that faced the sea. It was bounded at each end by a tower, and was dotted with rows of loopholes, which looked like black specks. The sea broke with a quiet murmur on the black rocks and shingle of the beach; and to the left of the town a little group of palm trees stood tranquilly near the scene of war and death.

"Launch's crew to muster! Pinnaces and barges to muster!" piped a boatswain's mate early in the forenoon. The crews drew up on each side of the quarter-deck and gangways with their arms. Lieutenant Primby was wonderfully attired; and Snigg, who walked about looking for the materials of fun amongst the preparations, remarked, that "no calf ever went to the slaughter half so gaily." Captain Pannikin marched about the deck, "smelling the battle afar off," and crying "Ha, ha!" and grunting "Now, then, Jones, cutlass,—hem! Mr. Fontenoy, see to Jones,—ugh!"

"At last, the boat shoved off. Bertie stood in the stern of the launch, with his purple face glowing, and angry and savage as the prospect of fighting made him. Fontenoy went with him, and stood alongside him. The heavy boat, with twenty long ponderous oars keeping time, and its carronade raised in the bow and standing above the bulwarks, like some savage beast on the watch, moved heavily along. "Silence, fore and aft," cried Bertie, looking round fiercely. The pinnace and barge kept line steadily, one on each side. The first cutter led the way in front. No sound was heard, except the measured, monotonous jerk of the oars, in the rowlocks. And so the little boat squadron advanced till they reached the "Rover" and "Viper." They drew up, and laid on their oars here, for now began the work of the frigate and the brig.

How white in the sunlight gleamed the city's wall—the tints of grey that time had painted it with brightening in the rays! In the centre a spot was marked for the "Rover" and "Viper" to fire at, and break an opening in. The boats waited to see this done.

Like lightning from the cloud broke the fire from the frigate's side. Like lightning from the cloud broke the fire from the brig. Down fell the shot on the wall in torrents. It dashed, it

stormed, it poured. The grey wall withered, and broke like thin ice. It peeled away like the bark of a dead tree. The white smoke from the vessels sailed slowly away over the surface of the water, and the eyes of every one in the boat were fixed on the doomed spot on the wall. Light broke through it suddenly, and houses were seen! The path was opened!

Off went the boats, "Patagonian's" first cutter taking the lead at a gallop. It was a brilliant race—a great Derby of the Sea! The cutter made the running, followed by the barge and pinnace of "Patagonian"—boats of "Rover" and "Viper,"—heavy old launch of "Patagonian" thundering after them, with carronade frowning in the bow, and a match smoking beside it. "Give way!" cried Bertie, grasping his cutlass. The men laboured like madmen, with hot sweat on their brows. Fontenoy grasped the ivory handle of his dagger. "Throw away that d——d thing," said Bertie, giving him a cutlass. He grasped it in his hot hand; his blood was maddened with excitement, and he longed to bound upon the beach.

The pace is tremendous. Three hundred yards more to run—and then the goal. Death is the goal for many of these brave riders. "Patagonian's" first cutter keeps the lead with a frightful stride, and reaches the beach. The lieutenant in her waves his sword, and he and his men jump on shore. Fire gleams along the wall. The loopholes are spitting it. Two of the cutter's crew drop and roll on the shingle, never to move more.

The launch thunders forward. A terrible shock shakes her. She has struck upon a reef! The other boats strike too, and the rowers are flung from their thwarts.

"Give way—give way; we'll get her over," cried Bertie, with a kind of desperate hope. "D—n it, Jones, don't catch crabs!"

Poor Jones had caught something worse: he dropped from his thwart, shot dead by a musket-ball. Another man gives a faint cry, and leaves his oar for ever. A darker flood must they embark on now! Fire keeps gleaming along the grey old wall. Two or three balls strike the boat, and bury themselves in the wood.

It was a desperate moment; but steadily as the moon shines on a stormy sea, shines the courage of a British officer in the hour of desperate danger.

"Point the carronade," cried Bertie; "every man that has a musket bring it to bear on a loophole." The orders were instantly obeyed. The carronade began firing. The ringing of ramrods and smart banging went on. Fontenoy jumped along the thwarts forwards, seized one of the muskets, and, picking out a loophole, fired steadily away at it. A seaman was killed close beside him, and spattered him with blood. He knelt down, and

filling his cap with water, held it to the poor fellow's mouth. The man breathed his last the instant after, and the tears came into Singleton's eyes with a sudden gush; but he dashed them away, and kept on firing.

A rushing hiss was heard above the boats. The "Rover" and "Viper" were firing just over their heads, at the shore. A desperate effort was made to lighten the boats over the reef,—all in vain.

Presently, a new arrival was seen. Old Pannikin came in his gig, and hovered about the scene with a musket; his old sporting propensities developing themselves in this crisis, he picked off the enemy "sitting," and even "on the wing," with much neatness, with a musket.

Such was the state of affairs, when Singleton, jumping up to take a good aim, felt a blow on the arm: he started, and fell overboard—he felt the water gurgling in his mouth—he struck and plunged—his head smote against something. For a moment a blue world of light and colour swam around him—he seemed to be dreaming—he tried to speak, like one struggling with nightmare: light seemed rushing into his mouth; then a cloud eclipsed his soul, and he was conscious of no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

We are associated in adolescent and adult life with some friends, who, like skies and waters, are co-extensive with our idea . . . We cannot choose but love them.
EMERSON. NATURE: AN ESSAY.

"WELL! Where is the soul now?"
"Where is the blossom in winter? Where——"
"Pshaw!"
"Hush—he wakes!"

Singleton opened his eyes—as a flower opens its leaves to the morning sun—and his look met two faces. Of those, one was a keen, sagacious countenance, with small bright eyes, and somewhat marked by the traces of small-pox: the other was that of the stranger of the brig. He looked round the room: it was a bare little cabin, with a couple of engravings, and a crucifix hanging up. He felt a sensation of coldness on his forehead: putting his hand to it, he touched a moist cloth that was lying on it. His left arm was very stiff: it was tightly bandaged. He felt exceedingly surprised.

The two looked at him kindly in silence. Then the handsome stranger said—

"Well, doctor, how is he?"

The other felt his pulse.

"Oh, it throbs nicely and steadily. Young gentleman, how do you like Beyrout?" he added, somewhat abruptly.

"I don't like Tortosa," said Fontenoy, smiling as he recovered himself. He heard a gurgle of water just by him, and as a light swelling motion was felt at the same instant, he knew he was out at sea.

"Very good," said the doctor, quietly. "Are you thirsty?"

"Rather hungry," said Singleton.

"That will do. I hand him over to you, Welwyn: I must go and see after my sick-list."

The doctor left, and within three minutes came in some tea—some dark-hued bread—some fresh-grown figs—and some honey fragrant of violet.

The stranger who had just been addressed by the name of Welwyn placed all these refreshments within easy reach of the cot in which Singleton was snugly ensconced. Singleton raised himself, leant against a background of pillows, looked in Welwyn's face, and smiled gratefully.

Welwyn took down a fez, with its long blue wave of silk threads, and placed it on Singleton's head: then taking down a small looking-glass, he held it before his face. Singleton looked, and as he saw himself blushing, and otherwise much as usual, grew quite composed.

"It seems to me that I am quite well," he said, breaking open a fig, and making a delicious plunge into the soft interior of one half. "But where am I?"

"On board the 'Viper,'" said Welwyn. "You fell into the water over the gunwale of the launch, as the bullet grazed you."

"The bullet!"

"Yes: it has done no serious injury, luckily. You can't swim, I suppose, and you knocked your head against a rock. At that instant, a retreat from that confounded attack was ordered. I was in a pinnace, and picked you up before your own people could; so I brought you on board here, and you were looked to, all right. The attack was abandoned, and we all weighed at sunset. It was a smart affair—six killed, and nearly twenty wounded."

Singleton listened with great interest to this little narrative—took a tremendous draught of tea, and a huge piece of bread, redolent of golden honey, and ejaculated, "By Jove!"

"Trim sails," was heard, and the trampling of feet and rattling of ropes over head. The considerate Welwyn stepped outside the cabin door, on to the lower deck, and seizing the end of the "wind-sail,"—a long canvass pipe, which came down the hatchway,—brought it near the

entrance: the fresh current of the rising breeze played delightfully round Singleton.

"Oh—you're too kind," he said, colouring.

Welwyn laughed. "Is it not a luxury, eh? Emperors could have no more than such a thing in such a climate."

"I think I may get up," said Singleton.

"Thanks to the sun of this country, your clothes are dry. I have got a clean shirt for you—and let me tell you that's more than most of the squadron have, now."

"Even that great man whom we saw, when you and I first met," said Singleton, laughing, "may not."

Welwyn laughed too. "He seems to me to have fallen under part of the curse of Kehama:—

> "And Water shall know me,
> And fear thee, and fly thee!"

"Ah!—what a ring there is in that verse," said Singleton, getting out of the cot, and beginning to attire himself.

"You love poetry?"

"As I do my own soul." Here he proceeded to apparel himself, and removed the wet cloth from his head. He had given it rather a hard rub, and the black hair round the place was stiff with blood. His left arm was stiff, too,—but these were trifles, and he felt very strong otherwise, and perfectly happy with his new acquaintance.

So they went on deck together, and Fontenoy looked round with astonishment at the tiny vessel, so different from his own huge "Patagonian," with her eighty guns. The "Viper" looked like a toy. What an elegant little top-gallant-forecastle raised at the bow! What compact boats and booms amidships! What pretty little carronades! And then her masts were varnished like fishing-rods. She was painted a clear, bright stone-colour. Her bitts, belaying-pins, and so on, were stained glossy black. Her hammocks were white as snow, and stowed with matchless care. She was, from one end to another, as trim and smart as a little milliner—and in a smartish breeze, as lively, too!

And a smartish breeze sprang up. The "Viper tacked—darting, like a needle, right into the wind's eye, as she did so. Singleton was astonished. This was different, indeed, from the "Patagonian," which was almost as long in stays as the "Rodney,"—and that's saying a good deal! He saw his old ship a mile to leeward, from the "Viper's" stern-grating, looking very majestic, but rather ponderous, and felt in no hurry to go on board again.

Commander Tinsley came on deck. His face was very red—

as it usually was, after dinner, and in the evening! He wore mustachios, too! This was a breach of all discipline, but he stuck to it. Stopford had politely snubbed him; the commodore had snubbed him, unpolitely. A court-martial had been hinted at—but Commander Tinsley would not shave. He neglected discipline and the razor; he had been "rapped over the knuckles," as the phrase is, over and over again, but his knuckles stood a great deal of rapping. He was a very singular little man, and very apt to carry on sail till he lost spars overboard—which he had to pay for out of his pay, as he did not grudge doing. He had some good private means, and considerable influence in his borough, by which last he gained the command of the "Viper." Altogether he did what the worthies of the old school most particularly detest—he "made a convenience of the service!"

"Hem!" said he to Fontenoy; "you're the younker of the 'Patagonian' that was hit, and nearly swamped, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Singleton, involuntarily smiling, as he touched his cap.

"Don't grin at me, like a Cheshire cat, sir," said Tinsley, sharply.

"Top-gallant clewlines," shouted the officer of the watch.

"Why, why, d—n my eyes, why?" A gust of wind, that made the "Viper" jump, and dash her bow against a wave which covered the whole deck with a shower of spray, might have taught him why; but he did not care.

"I must take the top-gallant sails off her."

"Take my old grandmother off her," said Tinsley. The masts bent here, like willows, and played "tug, tug;" but they held on, however. Tinsley had his full share of what is called "the devil's luck,"—and he deserved it. But some people expected that the "Viper" would go down, stern foremost some night, particularly with that square mainsail on her.

Presently, a serious squall came on. "Hands shorten sail," cried Tinsley, reluctantly. The men came tumbling up: Tinsley conducted the work, and with such a rich profusion of Billingsgate as astonished Singleton.

"Fore-yard, there—there's a tinker on the fore-yard, and a cobbler alongside him; you've a head, and so has a scupper-nail and a pumpkin! Look smart, you grass-combers; be quick, you ivory-elbowed lubbers," &c. &c. The truth was, that Tinsley, when young, had been a pupil of the celebrated R——, in the West Indies, that great "Billingsgate Quintilian" (as my friend Percival Plug, of the "Preposterous," calls him), who educated Lieutenant Hireling of the "Snob," and so many other ornaments of the profession.

"Mr. Welwyn, sir, look sharp, and be d—d to you; Mr. Bobus, go be d—d, sir."

Singleton stood aft, near the stern-gratings, in mute astonishment, during this scene; but nothing surprised him more than the admirable coolness of Welwyn, who betrayed neither irritation nor surprise, but went on doing his work as calmly and perfectly as possible.

At last, "call the watch" was heard; the ropes were coiled down, and Tinsley, redder than ever, and puffing hard for want of breath, came aft, and blew out like a weary grampus; then, suddenly he called out "Mr. Welwyn, come here,—Mr. Bobus, come here; come here, if you please, sir." This last was to our friend Fontenoy, who walked up to him, with more surprise than ever, as he saw Welwyn and Bobus approaching at the same time. What was the matter now?

"Mr. Welwyn, I used the word d—d to you, sir, just now," said Tinsley, formally.

"Don't mention it, sir," said Welwyn, bowing politely; and Singleton, glancing at him, fancied he could see a smile, sleeping, as it were, under the surface of his grave, intelligent face.

"I did, sir; I said d—d; I recollect it distinctly. Mr. Welwyn, I apologise." Here he touched his cap, and Welwyn did the same. "Mr. Bobus, I said 'Go be d—d' to you, sir. I apologise, also." Here the bowing ceremony again took place. "Young gentleman" (to Fontenoy), "I compared you to a Cheshire cat; it was vulgar, and wrong. Sir, I apologise." Once more he took off his cap, and Singleton did so also, beginning to be persuaded that the man was stark staring mad.

"Now, gentlemen, I hope you are satisfied; if not, I have a plain coat in my cabin, and will meet you on shore." This was kind and condescending of Tinsley, who would waive his rank, and shoot you, with the utmost kindness, if you liked it.

When this scene was over, he asked them all down to his cabin, where three or four bottles were cooling in flannel bags in a tub of water. Here he had a portrait of Mrs. Tinsley, whom he hated as he did cold water (I cannot express it more strongly) as an article of consumption. Next, he turned the hands up to "skylark," or amuse themselves. Singleton could not understand his motive for this; but presently the gallant commander walked forward to the galley-fire (the lower deck being clear), personally to superintend the preparation of his dinner by his black cook, Pompey. This was his invariable custom, and a strange sight it was, to see him in an old uniform jacket, with a cookery-book in his hand, persecuting that unhappy negro. Pompey was frightfully ignorant of the higher branches of cookery; and his commander, indeed, used to assert that he had

no other way of producing rotundity in a forcemeat ball than by rubbing it up and down his breast. He would tell you this when you were at soup, and if you shuddered, and looked sick, esteemed it a triumph of his comic powers, In truth, there was no way of accounting for all the peculiarities of Tinsley, except by the most popular theory among his own officers, which was, that five years' service on the coast of Africa had somehow affected his brain.

"Well, what think you of the 'Viper?'" said Welwyn to Fontenoy, when they found themselves in the berth—an odd little place, lighted by a "bull's-eye" in the deck, painted pink, which had got dirty, and with a scuttle that had a tendency to leak.

"I like it much," said Singleton, squeezing a hard, green lemon, with a leaf still on the stalk—refreshing sight in Syria! "But you are somewhat roughly handled, one way and another!"

"Yes," said Welwyn, thoughtfully; "but there is great freedom in the life; and a certain savage freedom is more favourable to philosophy than greater ease and comfort with more social restraint. Here are my consolations."

As he spoke, he opened a locker near him, and displayed a number of books—among them numbers of those little Leipsic editions of the classics, published by Tauchnitz, which are to be found scattered over all the Levant—dear in their homely aspect to the wandering student!

Singleton's eyes brightened. "I rejoice to find one who has tastes like my own."

Welwyn smiled rather sadly. "Some of your tastes differ perhaps. What, think you, fell from your clothes when I was helping you into the cot last night?"

"What?" asked Singleton, looking pale.

Welwyn smiled again, and took from the locker a piece of silver paper, through one end of which peeped part of a lock of brown hair. "I took care of it for you. Wonderful is the force of symbols, as I had occasion to illustrate to you once before."

Singleton pounced upon the hair. "Ah, the Lalage! Thank you, Welwyn." He displayed so much delight, that his companion looked at him with great interest; then sighed—perhaps at some recollection of his own. Welwyn was one of those melancholy idealists who, finding nothing in real life that satisfies their aspirations, reject what they can get, and live among their own fancies. They are discontented without being cynical, and though solitary, are not misanthropes. They are favourable to the movement of the age, but shrink from the participators in it; they love their friends, but go little near them. They read and meditate a great deal, and sometimes write, but will not publish.

They are ascetically inclined. If they have a weakness, it is quoting Carlyle and Emerson; and, poor fellows, they care for no luxury but a pipe!

Now Fontenoy was of the same class of intellect as Welwyn, but he was younger, and he chiefly sought beauty, while Welwyn sought intellect.

"What think you of this war?" said Singleton, sipping lemonade.

"Why, it's difficult to explain my feelings as to it. Placed as destiny has placed me, it is my duty to fulfil the conditions of my social position, and take part in it. In that, I apprehend," said Welwyn, looking rather abstracted, "I am right. But, but——"

Singleton gazed hard at him: he seemed absent for a moment.

"Well?" said Singleton, quietly.

"Oh, the idea of the war is not a divine one! It is a business affair,—murder made mechanical, and carnage without enthusiasm! 'Tis different from the Crusades!"

"Ah," said Singleton, "and if I had been killed yesterday!—Well,—I should not have been the first Fontenoy who died on this coast!"

"The first FONTENOY!" said Welwyn, surprised. In truth, it was then for the very first time that he learned our hero's name. It was strange, but it was the fact.

"Yes," said Singleton gaily, "how odd that I never told you my name." He did not perceive the entirely new look of interest that Welwyn's face assumed for a moment.

"And you never heard *my* name before you heard it on board here?" said Welwyn.

"No!" said Singleton, surprised in his turn.

"Ah—Fontenoy!" pursued Welwyn. "There was a battle for you—battle of Fontenoy, eh?" Welwyn smiled, and then said, "but your lemonade is full of pips!" And at this moment the other two members of the mess came in—Dr. Brunt, the assistant-surgeon who had attended Singleton, and a young, fair-haired boy, Simms, the clerk. Brunt was a very clever, shrewd, good fellow, and a great hand at his work—but, unfortunately, having never seen a human soul, either at a deathbed or a *post-mortem*, had taken a fancy to deny its existence, and was a thick and thin materialist, as hard as one side of his scalpel, and as sharp and keen as the other. Simms was a fine, tender-hearted little fellow, who, having been made a clerk from the original position of a ship's boy, was somewhat shy, and had an absurd notion that he was in some way inferior to other officers, generally. He adored Welwyn, who was very kind to him.

"Well, doctor, how is your sick-list?" said Welwyn, briskly.

"Capital. I have mended Brown's leg, and repaired Higgins' stomach. Sobkins will want a pill put in to-morrow morning, and then will be all right."

"Why, you always talk about your patients, as if they were so many tables and chairs," said Welwyn, smiling.

"So they are—for my purposes," said Brunt; "and it is better for them that I think so. Science should be cool, and raised above every emotion—as science. If our young friend here had died last night, I should have been devilish sorry for it" (which was quite true, for he was an exceedingly good-hearted man); "but I should have counted his last ten pulsations as I would count these lemon pips!"

Here the doctor mixed himself some rum-and-water. The commander was known to have gone to bed—very likely to sleep sound; the brig was under easy sail—everything was snug for the evening. Brunt took Singleton to his dispensary, and dressed his arm and head; and they returned to the berth to spend the evening.

What a pleasant evening that was! Welwyn, with his fine, calm mind, pouring out strange fancies; Brunt, clever, critical, and amusing; Simms asking questions, and giving such odd, original opinions; Fontenoy, joyous, lively, and full of cleverness and good-nature.

Morning came. The "Patagonian" was to leeward, as before, and a boat was observed coming from her; Singleton knew that it must be for him, and half wished that he had been wounded a little more severely.

He went to the berth, and found Welwyn alone. He told him that he was going; Welwyn was sorry, but he was quite serene, as usual! Singleton was moved.

"You said last night that you believed in love at first sight?" he said.

"Yes," said Welwyn, quietly. "Novalis somewhere compares its effect to magic!"

"And I believe in friendship at first sight!" said Singleton, holding out his hand. "Welwyn, I am glad to have made your friendship, and I hope to hold it long!"

"I am glad, too," said Welwyn, more composedly, "I hope the same."

"Thank you. Well, when shall we see each other? Come on board the 'Patagonian' when we reach Djouni,—come and dine with me."

"Thank you: I seldom go out; I don't mix in the squadron's gaieties at all."

"But for my sake!"

Welwyn smiled.

"My dear friend, it is not necessary to friendship that we should see each other; and by dinners it is somewhat, perhaps, profaned. We can be friends without these personal relations."*

Singleton looked rather blank: his notions of friendship had not reached this transcendental height. He shook hands warmly; and having bid all the gentlemen of the "Viper" good-bye also, jumped into the "Patagonian's" cutter.

Box was the youth in command of the boat. As they rowed away from her—

"I say, Singleton," he said, "how glad you must be to get out of that cussed small craft!"

CHAPTER IX.

Tambourgi, Tambourgi, thy larum afar,
Gives hopes to the valiant, and promise of war,
All the sons of the Mountain arise at the note,—
. . . . . .

BYRON.

THE war still progresses. Brave old Mehemet plucks with nervous fingers his white, silvery beard. A hard fate this, for the man of godlike genius—to be thwarted and thrashed by a swarm of mediocre bullies armed with brute force! Never mind, great Pasha, thou hast done thy work. A few years, and thou wilt sleep as soundly as "him who sleeps in Philæ." Yet it is hard to see the old age of a hero persecuted thus! To see a hero perishing by the grubbing industry of many little human insects—as Sylla died of the *morbus pediculoris*! Ibrahim is still with his forces, not far from the allies, and with him, still, is the old Emir Beschir, meditating treachery once more. Meanwhile, "Mahomet has come to the mountain" in the shape of Commodore Napier, whose blue burgee still floats on Lebanon; and near him, still waves the flag of Selim Pasha over his green tent.† The sky is raining roses and violets as usual, and a weary heat combines with a gorgeous colour to dazzle the senses—so that one feels somewhat like a phœnix burning slowly by spice-wood! The "Patagonian" is in the Bay of Djouni,

* Treat your friend as a spectacle * * * I do, then, with my friends, as I do with my books," &c. &c.—See EMERSON'S "Essay on Friendship."

† The author would direct those who want valuable information about Mehemet Ali, to read the "Egypt" of Prince Puckler Muskau—that able, excellent, fearless, and honest writer. Look, too, at the *admissions* of Eliot Warburton of the "Crescent and the Cross." Why are they so reluctantly made,

and our hero, Singleton, after being in the sick-list for a fortnight, has emerged well, once more, from below.

The "Patagonian's" mess were in the gunroom as usual, one morning in October. Sidon had fallen. Beyrout was not yet evacuated, but further proceedings were daily expected. The mess were talking over that brilliant exploit performed by the "Hastings" at Beyrout—the cutting off of a mine—in which the gallant young Luscombe, who was serving as a volunteer, fell. Honour to all enthusiasts! His grave should not want a laurel if my pen could give it one. But he sleeps well—not far from Lady Hester Stanhope, I fancy. He has his grave with that divine dreamer. Lamartine has been on the spot; Eöthen has written about it. The Mediterranean murmurs near; an Eastern sun lights it; the wind sighs among the palm-trees there. What can an enthusiast want more?

"That was a brave fellow," said Lord Clarion, with a warm sympathy.

Fontenoy was going to burst into a eulogium, when a quartermaster put his head into the gunroom door, and announced that Captain Pannikin wished to speak to him.

"What can be the matter?" asked Singleton, rather startled.

"You're in for it," cried a midshipman. "Was it you who milked his cow the other morning?" For Captain Pannikin had a cow on board to supply his table with milk, and Snigg used to compare him to the "fatted calf" in consequence. For, Snigg liked milk (with some rum, sugar, and nutmeg in it!) and none of the milk of the said cow ever reached him, which made Snigg indignant.

Fontenoy found Pannikin in his cabin, with a map before him, and in his fat red fingers a pair of compasses. On the table was his favourite volume, "Inman's Navigation," and its faithful ally, a Nautical Almanac. The captain was red in the face from repletion and heat.

"Mr. Fontenoy, hem! I'm pleased with you, sir, ugh!—I mentioned you in my despatch, about the attack of the other day, hem!"

Mr. Warburton? As to the history of the war operations of our force, Hunter's "Expedition" is valuable—and I am much indebted to it. But Mr. Hunter seems like many Englishmen to have carried his prejudices out with him in his portmanteau! How came he to let a note in, comparing grave, active, far-seeing Mehemet to dancing, fiddling, half-maniac, half-buffoon Nero? Mr. Hunter should read Suetonius again, and blot out the improper comparison from his work—of which I would willingly take a civil leave, as a pleasant, useful companion. It contains, too, some capital passages quoted from Mr. A. Doyle, which increase its value.—Timid readers who have heard bluebeard stories about Mehemet Ali's cruelties, and who are rose-waterishly inclined, should read Carlyle's article on "Francia" in his "Miscellanies"—to say nothing of his other writings.

Fontenoy bowed and expressed his thanks, and began to form a hazy vision of himself in command of the Channel squadron.

"Well, sir—you are to go with a letter to the commodore in the camp, sir." Singleton bowed again. The document was handed to him, and in a few minutes he was skimming along in the "Patagonian's" neat little second gig. He had brought the handsome pistols with him, and wore his dirk. In his white trousers, blue camlet jacket, pretty gold-laced cap, and so on, he looked rather a brilliant fellow as he jumped upon the beach. The sea fringed it with pearly foam, and the pebbles gleamed like precious stones. Drawing a long deep breath of the odorous air, he ordered the boat's crew to return on board, and took his way along a path of rock that looked like petrified pomegranate. The beach was covered with the bustle of war, and the sea was alive with boats. It was a sparkling and a stirring scene.

How often has man acted his first scene on this planet, over, since? It was done here, once more. What was Dijouni? A paradise turned into a camp! And for an angel with a flaming sword, stood an English soldier with a fixed bayonet. Singleton gained the camp and looked around. War had made havoc of that fair spot. Little stumps in the ground met his eye on the way. These had been mulberry-trees—dear to the silkworm. Where were the silkworms gone, and what were the human worms to do, who had lived by their spinning? Where were the myrtles whereon the fireflies shine? There were huge ramparts, and a perfect Sahara of sand-bags, and grey white tents instead. Groups of armed men in gaudy dresses were about, with long-barrelled muskets with yellow hoops of brass. Nargillys fumed, and red clay pipe-bowls rested on the ground, sailors were smoking their short white pipes near, and mountaineers were selling grapes. The head of a dead sheep was lying near a corner of the rock, with large blue flies swarming on it.

A pretty little Maronite chapel, with a rude cross at one end, met Singleton's eye. A small cannon showed its nose at the window. The chapel was the commodore's abode, and the commodore's blue pendant floated triumphantly over the emblem of Christ!

The camp was nearly empty, for the commodore had gone to Cornichovahn, where the allies were assembling, and where Singleton learnt that several battalions had early gone. The eagles and vultures knew that too, in their lofty dwellings in the mountain!

To Cornichovahn! Thither Singleton must bend his way.

He procured from a mountaineer a small black horse, with Turkish saddle, and shovel stirrups, bridle eked out by knotty rope, and other gay caparisons like ragged carpets of a light pattern. Giving a dollar to this man, and a piastre, by way of backsheesh, to him, that he might refresh himself with aniseed, he shouted "Cornichovahn;" the mountaineer cried "Cornichovahn!" and pointed in the direction of a mountain ridge. Singleton set off at a canter, leaving the sea behind, and plunged into Lebanon!

The day was still young, and the sun was rising above the mountains, and charming them into amber. As he ascended the hilly path, and gazed upon the view around, he drank the fresh air as if it had been a luxurious wine. And what a bouquet it had! He plucked the roses from the rocks as he rode by; and fragrant bushes rained sweetness down. Below him, his eye travelled along the line of a dried-up mountain torrent, with stones as white as human bones. A melancholy spectacle! What saith Lamartine—he whose genius seems to have been fired by the morning-land, and, like Memnon's statue, to have been made vocal by the rays of the Eastern sun:—

> "——— l'homme, hélas! après la vie
> C'est un lac dont l'eau s'est enfuie;
> On le cherche, il vient de tarir."

Many a spot he saw, which the Crusader might have chosen to fix his cross in, that he might kneel down and pray before it. And he, too, was a Crusader! That was an amusing thought, and Singleton set off at a gallop, and made the rocks ring with laughter, as it came into his head. A crusader in the cause of Downing Street! Hurrah!—down with the Infidel, and up with—what?—the Funds! Up with the Sublime Porte!

He gazed with joy on the lofty sycamore with its broad and deep green leaves, and the palm, and the olive, and the mulberry, and little hamlets peeping here and there, gay with colour, and looking as if built of china.

Presently he saw a beautiful little grey convent, perched upon a hill. He rode up to the gate and coughed loudly, for Mr. Singleton began to feel very thirsty, and as yet saw no sign of the place he wished to get to. Indeed, he had been musing as he galloped along, and the whole scene was too gorgeous for any man of a lively fancy to think of business. Business! There was a profanity in the idea. It seemed like turning to to roast and eat a bird of Paradise.

Under the shade of a mulberry-tree sat a little ecclesiastic with a round, jovial face, but with a look of extreme acuteness and courage. He rose, as Singleton's horse stopped opposite

the gate. "Father," said Singleton, romantically, and with a historical-novel kind of look, "I am athirst!"

The little monk shook his head, and did not understand—or pretended not to understand him. Singleton repeated himself in the French tongue with the same result. Suddenly a happy idea struck him. This of course was a Maronite convent: the ecclesiastic was probably a Jesuit, and certainly a Roman Catholic. Latin he must know. Now, though Singleton was a very good Latin scholar, as times go, he had never *spoken* a word of it in his life, and the effect of it was ridiculous enough.

"*Loquerisne Latine, sancte pater?*" (Do you speak Latin, holy father?) said Singleton, pronouncing the Latin foreign fashion, to make sure, and grinning.

The little man looked up surprised, and smiled. "*Loquorne Latine! Res sane mirabilis esset, si ego in istâ linguâ haud maxime versarer!*" (It would be odd if I did not.)

"*Nunc est bibendum!*" shouted Singleton, jumping from his horse, and entering the gate, he threw his horse's bridle over it. The little monk invited him in, still smiling his surprise, brought some lemonade, brought some coffee, and a pipe, brought some of the famous *vino d'oro* of the mountain! Singleton looked round the refectory. It was a fine spacious chamber.

They went on talking in a curious style, and Singleton was absolutely forgetting his duty altogether, when he heard a distant rolling sound. The sound echoed through the mountains in waves of echoes, which played from hill to hill. He jumped to his feet, and asked the monk the way to Cornichovahn. The monk pointed. Singleton jumped on horseback, waved his cap, and galloped off—regardless of all danger of stumbling—in the direction. He could see blue smoke floating in the air there, and heard the low, rattling sound of firing. He bounded along the rugged paths—the horse leaping like a chamois—battle lying before him—and everything else forgotten. Scenery, cause, musing, poetry, and all, were driven away by the din of war.

He reached the heights—hot, breathless, and excited—and found himself in the middle of the commodore's force. The commodore himself! Ah, that was a picture! When some painter like Hogarth takes to the historical department, we shall probably see it exhibited. Grasping a ship's cutlass—terrible and ludicrous at once—this wonderful general turned battle into a "row," and for a war-cry had a hearty "daamn!"

Singleton galloped up with his letter from Pannikin. The commodore took it.

"Go and fight, sir—ye're joost in time," he said.

Singleton got a cutlass, in imitation of his gallant commander, and galloped up to the Turkish battalions, as a volunteer.

The army was perched on a long narrow range of hills;* and the enemy (who were commanded by Ibrahim Pasha) held three distinct positions, one behind the other, before them. Out of these they had to be beaten in succession. It was a wild and rocky scene; and Singleton could not help thinking, as he saw the wild mountaineers on his side, pouring down to the attack like one of their native streams, that the affair had more a brigand look, than anything else.

Our battalion of Turks advanced in companies, with the crescent waving. They rushed to attack the first position. Fire gleamed from the heights. On came the children of Othman with their red caps, wavering like a field of scarlet poppies when the wind is rising. Here and there the firing thins them: never mind, oh true believers!—houris are waiting to embrace him who falls in battle! Hear you not the rustling of their green veils? Steadily on they went, under a hot fire. Suddenly they broke!—broke *en tirailleur*—broke in a long line, along the ridge—ran to fight behind rocks and ruined houses! The enemy from their *plateau* kept firing. A second and a third battalion were sent on, and broke too. It seemed a fatal moment. Singleton's horse, which had taken fright at the firing, broke away at a desperate gallop. A bullet sang past his ear: he clenched his teeth. Suddenly the poor beast made a spring forward, flung his rider over his neck, and fell—shot dead. Singleton rolled over, and jumped up, with his face cut.

"Hillo, younker, who pays for the nag?" shouted a loud voice near him.

The commodore was rallying the wavering battalions—flinging stones at them—pelting the hesitating—damning everybody.

"Daamn it all—move on—daamn ye!"

The cutlass waved like a scythe. The Turks were kicked and thrashed into action: they mounted the hill; they gained the first position. Singleton was with them: pistol in one hand, he rushed up. He shot an Egyptian through the brain. There was a smart skirmish—the enemy retreated—the *plateau* was gained!

There was a rush at the second position. The enemy broke and gave way. Singleton caught a moment's sight of a stern face: it was Ibrahim Pasha, mounted on horseback, with a group of officers. He was retreating! A knot of Egyptians held their ground for an instant. Singleton, with a party of Turks, rushed to the spot. One of the enemy made a lunge at him with a bayonet; he had a green Turkish standard round

* See Commodore Napier's despatch—Hunter's "Expedition," vol. i. p. 191.

him. Singleton stepped aside—fired the other pistol—missed. He rushed at the man with his cutlass, and fell upon him, and they rolled over together. In the struggle he drew his dirk, and stabbed the enemy in the throat. Slowly the man's grasp relaxed; the blood bubbled heavily out of his wound. Singleton panting, saw his eyes film—grasped the green standard—and fainted.

When he recovered he was in a tent. Night had come on, and the army were encamped, peacefully, on the mountain. He went out, and walked under the starry sky in the fresh sweetness of night. Some officers, who formed the staff of the commodore, congratulated him on his capturing the standard; but the look of the dying man haunted him; and the silent stars seemed to arraign him at their high tribunal for murder.

Beyrout was evacuated about the same time that this defeat of Ibrahim Pasha took place. About this time, too, old Emir Beschir, having watched the tide of affairs, deserted the cause of Mehemet, and gave himself up on board the squadron. He was removed to Malta, and comfortably housed in the palace at St. Antonio, where he ended his days in the *cochon à l'engrais* style.

Singleton had to pay forty dollars for the horse; but he gained considerable reputation by his exploits on that memorable day, and was generally pronounced to be a "promising young officer." However, he was by no means so elated as might have been expected; nor did he relish the profane pleasantry of Snigg, who used frequently to say to him,—"Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

CHAPTER X.

Stories to read are delectable,
Suppose that they be naught but fable:
Then should stories that soothfast were,
If they were said in good manner,
Have double pleasure in hearing!
* * * *
For, old stories that men reads,
Represents to them the deeds,
Of stalwart folks that lived air,
Right as they then in presence were.
BARBOUR. *The Life and Acts of King Robert Bruce.*

IT was evening,—the evening of the 2nd November, 1840, and the eve of the siege of Acre. The squadron were lying at anchor before the doomed town. To-morrow was to finish the crusade. Lights twinkled here and there in the city, where,

doubtless, many a swarthy Eastern was smoking his chibouque, whom next evening would find lying amidst the ruins of shattered ramparts, with his pale face turned up towards the stars. Mount Carmel loomed darkly in the distance; it was a still and tranquil scene, and there was a cheerful effect every now and then, in the clear, sharp ring of the ship's bells over the water, as they sounded the hours. The crusaders of the "Patagonian" were in the gunroom,—listening to Blondel's lay?*—invoking the saints?—No; this is an enlightened age, and they were otherwise occupied.

The facetious Snigg was mixing his rum-and-water, with that coolness which distinguishes the hero when danger is impending.

"Will it be very bloody, think you?" asked Lovell, twirling his spoon with a half careless air, and perhaps a little flutter.

"Most terrifically so, I should fancy," said Snigg, watching him slyly. "Algiers was,—don't I know stories about that! Navarino was no joke, either. Oh, these Easterns are savage dogs! Napoleon could not take it; Ibrahim Pasha was six months about it in 1831.

"You don't say so!"

"Have you made your will?" asked Snigg, coolly, for indeed Snigg had made up his mind to assist the surgeon next day, if such an arrangement were possible, and was thus a model of firmness.

"Hang my will!" said Lovell, indignantly.

"It appears to me a proper crisis to write home for money," said Rowdy Gaffer, after a few moments of profound reflection.

"Hear, hear!" cried Box.

"A governor must have a heart of iron who could resist a letter dated on the eve of battle," said Bludgeon, pathetically.

"Some governors are capable of anything," said Box, severely. And as Box the elder held the same opinion of some sons, the worthy couple used to squabble a good deal.

"Well, Fontenoy, what news?" asked Snigg; for Singleton had just entered the gunroom in his pilot coat. Singleton had the first watch, which lasts from eight to twelve.

"Nothing particular; a fine enough night, with light airs from the northward. Ah, Snigg, you profane scoffer, come and look at the place where the Crusaders fought! There was a De Fontenoi here with Richard."

* See "The Crescent and the Cross," vol. ii. p. 112, for a charming little crusading picture, quoted from Lord Lindsay's beautiful Eastern "Letters."

"A barbarian, my boy," said Snigg; "come and have some grog."

"Peace, knave," said Singleton, laughing. "Fancy the nodding plumes and the blazoned shield,—God at his heart, and a spear in his hand! Fancy him at sunset, with his casque lying on the grass——"

"His *cask?*" said the atrocious punster, laughing; "was he such a confirmed tippler as that?"

"Snigg, you are hopeless," said Singleton, smiling, and he went on deck again. Old Bertie had the watch there, and Primby commanded it; Bertie and Singleton walked about together, and talked away in a singular strain, for the old mate was in a curious state of remorse and philosophy, and had some rum and a pipkin of cool water lying in the gangway recess. About eleven o'clock Singleton and he sat down there; Primby was looking at the fortifications through a night telescope on the other side.

"Well, my boy," said Bertie, *à propos* of something he had been relating, "take advice; you're just entering the world, and I'm going to leave it——"

"Why, Bertie, you're not thirty-five."

"Never mind, youngster," said Bertie; "that has nothing to do with it. I've dealt with my life as I have with my income;—I've drawn it nearly all in advance! My constitution's knocked up—I shan't live long. It's a d—d pity!" Here he took a long pull at the tumbler.

"My father was an old rip before me; dissipation runs in a family like madness, and perhaps its worse. After my mother's death" (he lowered his voice here, and Singleton appreciated it), "he broke out very bad. What do you think made me come to sea? I could not keep on terms with his mistress! My brother could. Some people are such Christians—when there's an estate in prospect! Well, I stayed away a long time, and I came home with good reputation; the mistress had gone away——"

"That was a good thing," said Singleton.

"Yes,—but he had got another one! He was civil enough, and as I was eldest son,—of course I expected the land, as it had always gone in our family in regular succession——"

"Who's there?" shouted the sentry on the forecastle, at this instant. Bertie broke off, and jumped to his feet, and they both ran forward to the forecastle.

"What's the matter, sentry?" asked Bertie.

"A man swimming, sir," answered the sentry. "Shall I fire?"

"Wait an instant!—where is he?"

The sentry pointed to an object in the water, on the larboard bow; the moon shone upon it, and the water round played and quivered with a phosophoric sparkle; it was a man, sure enough.

"Ah! deserting from the 'Jupiter,' perhaps," said Bertie, for the "Jupiter" was lying not far from the "Patagonian;" but the man seemed to make no progress.

"By G—— he's drowning!" cried Bertie. And excited as he was, he climbed into the fore-chains, and plunged overboard. It was with a dull, leaden plash that he fell, and by some strange instinct, Singleton suddenly thought of the sound made in the water by the fall of the body of the man whom they had buried after they left Gibraltar.

Primby came running forward at the noise. Singleton told him what had happened. A boat's crew was instantly summoned, and, meanwhile the quartermaster of the watch and Singleton ran along the boom and jumped into the cutter that was lying at it;—they pulled away towards Bertie.

Steadily played the moonlight on the water, and a track of light followed Bertie as he struck out towards the swimmer. They saw him reach the drowning man,—they rowed hard to the spot. Suddenly they heard a loud cry and a wild splashing. They reached the place in time to pick up Bertie insensible; in another minute he would have gone down like a stone.

But the swimmer—the drowning man? The ghastly moonlight played like a shroud round a creature of corruption. It was the corpse of a seaman who had been buried by one of the ships some time before, and who had broken from his funeral moorings, and started upwards to the air again. Poor Lazarus! there was no redemption for him now.

It was past twelve o'clock when the boat reached the ship's side. The watch was relieved; Lord Clarion had come up for the middle watch, and was waiting at the gangway. Singleton told him what had happened. Bertie was insensible still, so one of the assistant-surgeons was called, and a cabin in the cockpit being vacant, Bertie was put to bed in it.

"And about the corpse?" asked Singleton.

"*Il n'y a que les morts qui ne revient pas,*" muttered Clarion. "This refutes the saying of Barrère, don't it?"

Lieutenant Tressel had charge of the watch, and they spoke to him about it.

"I wish the fellow had chosen his own ship to come up before," said Tressel. "We must sink him with shot immediately. Sailors are confoundedly superstitious, and this will make our men gloomy."

So the corpse was duly sunk again, immediately.

Singleton did not feel sleepy, so he waited on deck some time, talking with Tressel and Clarion.

"I suspect Old Bertie was on the verge of *delirium tremens*," said Clarion. "It must have been a shocking surprise to him to clutch a dead body——"

"Ugh!" ejaculated Tressel, with a fastidious shudder. "And who knows whether he did not associate it in his mind with what he had been saying to you before—eh, Fontenoy?"

Here the assistant-surgeon came on deck, and reported that Bertie had a fever.

"Poor old boy! The firing to morrow won't soothe it," said Clarion. Singleton went down to the cockpit, looked at Bertie, and then went and turned into his hammock, where he fell asleep immediately.

He was awakened at daylight by the rattling of the drum. The ship was clearing for action. The men were casting loose the guns—tricing up bulwarks—hanging fire-screens round the hatchways, and making other preparations. Midshipmen were mustering their quarters. Mr. Scale, the gunner, singularly attired, was making ready for his magazine duties.

As Singleton's post was that of aide-de-camp to the gallant Captain Pannikin, he went on deck to attend that officer, who, girded by a huge old sword, looked like a nautical Hudibras. He was walking about the poop, and very likely thinking of Trafalgar, though it would be difficult to name a recollection more utterly out of place on the present occasion!

Singleton, with a spy-glass, gazed upon the grim walls facing the sea, and presently saw the huge old Turkish ship commanded by Walker Pasha, weigh and stand towards Mount Carmel. The wind was light; the morning air was hot. The breeze rose and died listlessly, like the languid respirations of a sick man. The four steamers, "Gorgon," "Stromboli," "Phœnix," and "Vesuvius," with clear blue steam hissing upwards, and curling away in the air, hovered about, ready for service, and as yet it seemed uncertain how the battle was to begin. The ships were away from the batteries, and the sea breeze had not set in.

Meanwhile, "pipe to breakfast" ran with a clear, shrill whistle through the ship, and presently the men were swarming on the lower deck, between the guns, breaking biscuit, and mixing it with their cocoa, in their little white-and-brown basins, and eating away very merrily. The gunroom had a melancholy, dismantled appearance. The bulwarks were triced up, and besides that, orders had been given to get ready the sheet-anchor, for anchoring by the stern, so that the huge hemp sheet-cable lay coiled up in gigantic folds ("like a d———n mammoth snake," as one

of the mates forcibly expressed himself) in that apartment. But, however, here the mess congregated, and consumed cold meat and bread, and also sherry and pale ale, with an indescribable joy at the prospect of fighting, which made every other consideration contemptible. Fighting and promotion were the two leading ideas; and if it had been Jerusalem or Rome, or Mecca, or Bethlehem, that was to be thundered at that day, it would have been all the same to these gallant crusaders. Indeed, the great gallantry of the officers and men, and the great mechanical perfection of the instruments or war, alone prevent the Syrian war, when its cause, and various things in the *conduct* of it are considered, from being utterly contemptible, and too mean for satire.

The sherry sparkled, and the ale foamed in the cups of the gunroom crusaders, and a lively conversation prevailed during the repast.

"Snigg is not so facetious as usual this morning!" said Somers, with a meaning glance towards the jester, who certainly was a little overcast.

"Snigg is a philosopher," said he, "and contemplates the destruction of human life with an awe little known to the frivolous."

"Oh! oh!" and a general laugh, followed Snigg's demure speech. Snigg, even at that early hour, was consuming some rum-and-water.

"Well, Snigg, going to attend the sick, eh?" asked another, with a grin.

"No; it seems it's my duty to take minutes of the proceedings on deck. Never mind; I shall keep Pannikin between me and the batteries. Any shot that can go through him must be a stunner!"

"Are the ships to wait for the sea breeze?" asked Singleton.

"I hope so," muttered Snigg, devoutly.

"No; the steamers are to tow them into their positions, I hear, one by one," said Clarion.

"Then I'm d—d if we shan't be licked!" cried Somers.*

"One down and the other come on!" shouted Box, with enthusiasm.

"Two to one on the English chicken against the Egyptian pet!" cried his friend Rowdy Gaffer, in sporting phrase.

"If one gets killed through a blunder of the admiral's, will an action by one's executors, for damages, hold against the old fellow?" said Snigg, with a melancholy grin.

"A very improper question," said Snob Toadyley, with his flunkeyish serious look.

* See Commodore Napier's "War in Syria," vol. i. pp. 199 to 219, for matter, all interesting—some *curious*.

"I would report it if I were you," said Snigg, sneering.

"It would serve you right," said Toadyley, turning red with rage.

"And I would serve *you* right," said Snigg, with a glance of menace. But here the beat to quarters was again heard, and this skirmish was interrupted by a summons to a more serious fray. In a few minutes the hands were all at quarters again. Singleton returned to the poop, and regained the side of his captain. Captain Pannikin appeared in a state of considerable perplexity. Perhaps his instructions were unintelligible; perhaps he could not understand them through his own deficiencies. All this while the wind kept rising, dying, varying, and shifting, with the most profound disregard of the wishes of the squadron. There is something very sublime in the majestic indifference of Nature to men's small projects and wars.

Now, however, it seemed that a light wind from the southward was likely to hold. The signal was made "to weigh." And soon the ships stretched in a long stately line, with their lofty canvass spread to the wind, towards Mount Carmel. The grey batteries grew more distinct. The holy mountain loomed clearer in the still air. The squadron advanced in a very gentle and stately manner, and spread out like some fair princesses taking up their position in a dance.

And now the wind began to change and come from the northward. A signal was made from the "Powerful" to tack. Like a flock of birds changing their direction, they swooped round gracefully. The breeze began to freshen; the sea broke into long, rippling lines of blue waves. Away, on the larboard tack, went the stately "Princess Charlotte," rough old fiery "Powerful," splendid "Thunderer," and all the train of war. Gristly and grey were the old sea walls, as if built of mouldering human bones. A mosque tranquilly raised its head away in the inside of the town. And here and there up went the scarlet flags boldly enough, indicating that on behalf of brave old Mehemet some sort of fight would be made, even against the finest chivalry of the sea.

Singleton was standing on the poop, with a spy-glass, looking anxiously at the batteries. He heard some one near him, and turned and saw Snigg. Snigg was taking considerable pinches of snuff, and moving about very briskly.

"I say, Singleton, look at Mount Carmel! I dare say, the d—d old monks are peering out to look at the fight!" he said. "Serve 'em right, if they were here!"

At this moment, up went a signal from the "Phœnix" steamer—on board which Admiral Stopford was superintending the operations of the day—to "bear up."

"Bear up," muttered Pannikin. "Hillo—what's that the 'Powerful' says?" For, in reply to this last signal, the commodore was hoisting something or other.

"He intends attacking from the north, sir!" answered the signal officer.

Just as he spoke, some of the batteries began to open fire, and as a pack of hounds breaks into cry, the roaring of cannon began.

The "Powerful" hauling up near the wind, to weather a shoal which extended off the west batteries, made away with "Princess Charlotte," "Thunderer," "Bellerophon," and "Pique." The remainder of the squadron, led by Captain Stewart, of the "Benbow," who in a crisis of confusion asked permission to attack from the south (with great promptitude and tact), diverged to attack the southern batteries. In a short time, the whole squadron got anchored, somehow or other, and at it they went, pell-mell. There was no confusion then! It was all straightforward work. It was a thunderstorm—all lightning and shot.

The "Patagonian" took up a position in Captain Stewart's division. "Load and fire" were the only necessary orders. The air was darkened with smoke. The town was inundated with cannon-balls. They poured upon it like specks of soot. The fortifications crumbled away, and bared like trees in winter. It was the work of centuries condensed into an afternoon—the spectacle of ruins made in an hour. The poor Egyptians met death everywhere—death from shot—death leaping from their shattered walls—death glancing from their broken guns—death bursting from shells—death from above and below, and around—death in the air—death on the earth! The air was heavy with death! And the perfumed wind from the Syrian shore mixed with the foul smoke, and met death too.

Meanwhile, on board the "Patagonian," the affair began to wear the aspect of a *battue*. In the opening of the battle a shot whistled a little overhead, but nobody was touched. An hour passed. The water was cut up now and then, and some ropes were shot away; but the hull of the "Patagonian" remained intact. It passed gradually from a "battle" to a "lark," and then it became "a bore." Snigg, who still kept on the poop, grew most wonderfully facetious; swore this was "killing-day" at Acre, and hoped next time anything of the sort was to be done, Government would have it done "by contract." Really, it was scarcely work for a gentleman, Snigg said.

"I say, Singleton," he went on, "I think somebody ought to be killed or wounded, for the sake of a decent list."

As he spoke, a shot hissed close over their heads; Singleton turned and looked at him; he was deadly pale. "No, d—n it,

I was only joking," he stammered out, as if anxious to propitiate some avenging Nemesis unseen at hand.

"Hush!" said Singleton.

Captain Pannikin was not far from them; he was seated on a chair (which he had brought up from his cabin), with a cotton umbrella over his head!

In the course of the afternoon, Singleton was sent on a message to the lower-deck quarters; he found several fellows aft there, in the part which formed the gunroom, drinking pale ale! Snigg was with them; Box had come down from his station on the main-deck, where he had been firing a gun frequently at the batteries; he was crowing with delight at some exploit which he had performed, and wiping the grimy perspiration from his face. As they stood there, they saw one or two shot skipping along the water astern like india-rubber balls.

"Look there!" cried Box, jumping with joy, and clapping his hands.

"Be quiet, you young butcher!" said Snigg, swallowing a glass of ale.

"The town's smashed," said a midshipman; "it's all up with it."

Just as he spoke, a crimson glare burst upwards to the sky: a gleam of intense light shone over the town; heaven and earth seemed startled with the shock, and the ship palpably trembled through her whole huge frame. Then a mighty cloud wrapped everything for an instant in a deadly darkness—a pall that might have wrapped a dead race—gloomy, lowering, sullen, sad; and then was heard a hissing in the water, as from the fall of heavy rain, and showers of stones and fragments of ruin fell around the ship. A great powder-magazine had burst. Hundreds of the enemy were scattered to the four winds of heaven, and the whole town seemed turned into a funeral pile.

The day was now declining; the sinking sun, glaring through the dense clouds of smoke, red and faint—a gleam of blood over a scene of blood! The signal was made to "cease firing," and the cannonading died away like a failing thunderstorm. That night, the Egyptians evacuated their city. Next day, the town was given up: and thus ended the siege of Acre, the last action in the Syrian war.

Singleton was on shore next day, and saw the results of the action—a scene of ruin and death. His notes are before me. But I pass them by, and conclude the chapter with the hopeful, devout, fanciful couplet of Leigh Hunt.*

> "Good is a hundred—evil, but one:
> Round about goeth the golden sun."

* "Captain Sword and Captain Pen."

CHAPTER XI.

Heavens! what delight in breathing,
Freshness on the ocean green,
When the sun resigns his empire,
To the night's pale silvery queen.
LAMARTINE: "The Gulf of Baia." (*North's Translation.*)

THE Syrian war was over, and the squadron had gone to anchor in Marmorice Bay, to winter there. The siege of Acre was followed by a squabble between the admiral and the commodore—the details of which have no place in this history. The admiral, it seems, thought that his second in command ought to have anchored to attack the "south angle." The commodore preferred another course. The admiral snubbed him:—the commodore wrote for a court-martial. However, the dignified consideration that such an event might stop "promotions" prevailed: the quarrel did not pass the limits of the ludicrous. This petty squabble was followed by an unauthorized convention. The commodore took it upon himself to negotiate a peace with Mehemet Ali. It was repudiated by the admiral and Lord Ponsonby. Nevertheless, it was confirmed by the Government. Thus, everything about this campaign was irregular to the last. It occupies a singular position in history. It has not dignity sufficient for a war, and was too bloody for a farce!

The Bay of Marmorice is a fine circular bay on the coast of Asia Minor, not far from Rhodes. It is surrounded by high hills, and a well-wooded country. Here the squadron came to winter. The little town shot up into a sudden burst of civilization. Wooden buildings made their appearance, where speculative Greeks, Maltese, and various specimens of the vagrant traders of the Levant, sold wine and coffee, and let out horses to the squadron. Here and there, a stray native from the wild country round, with a long musket and a knife in his girdle, came in to sell a hare. Tawdry and dirty bazaars were established, with little articles for sale. A native contractor supplied bullocks for the squadron's fresh meat. Youngsters went on shore in the jolly-boats of their ships to bring off the beef, and rivalled each other in carrying on a dangerous press of sail as they went off with it. Thus passed the winter.

Fontenoy was bored. He was worse, he was hipped. He suffered from a moral *ennui*—a weariness without a name. In a romantic land, he had lost the romantic soul. Thus it is, that we find how unjust we are to our own environments and circumstances—which ought to make our moral happiness for us, as naturally as the atmosphere receives and disperses the sun's

light around us. We go abroad to try to find ourselves at home. We peer into the Nile, and the Scamander, and the Jordan, and discover that the divine rivers will only reflect to us our own faces.

Poor Bertie died in Marmorice Bay, of the fever which he caught the night before Acre. His funeral was a melancholy sight. A dozen boats glided along in line, each with its ensign lowered—that brave English ensign which only strikes to death! In one of these was the body. In another, a ship's band played the Dead March, which sounded in strains of proud sorrow far over the water. They made him a rude grave near the beach, on that wild land, and he sleeps well under the shadow of a wooden cross. Fontenoy was there, and thought, with moist eyes, of poor Bertie's chequered career. It was with a strange feeling that he jumped into the boat, which he commanded, and cried, "Give way, men." The boat started off, and shot merrily through the water. He turned round to look again at the melancholy spot, and thought again of the wild career of him who slept there.

"Well, it is better, after all, than to crown a toady's life with a snob's monument!" The oars flashed through the waves briskly, and he soon reached the ship.

A week afterwards the mess were at dinner, or rather at dessert. Fontenoy was sipping claret, and reading Catullus. There is a gaiety about Catullus which is as refreshing as music. He delights you, because he seems to delight himself. He pelts you with the flowers of his poetry, not that you may enjoy the perfume, but that he may revel in the fun. It is all play and grace. It is a flow of animal spirits charmed by genius.

The door opened, and a midshipman from the "Princess Charlotte" came in. He had came on board on duty, but in the service the junior officers have more extended views of duty than their superiors, and think it ought to embrace a visit to the gunroom. So, as he had known Lord Clarion in some other ship, he came down to see him. He was quite right. For my own part, I would not undertake to pronounce on the discipline of a ship until I had visited the officers' messes. If these were pleasant, gentlemanly, and so on, with some English novels and French wines, I should be certain that the vessel was in admirable order. Men who live like Hottentots, will fight like Hottentots, and *vice versâ*:—as things are, now-a-days, the greatest military efficiency is usually found associated with the greatest culture and luxury.

"Ah, Pug," said Clarion; for the midshipman was that Pug Welby of whom we had a glimpse at Malta.

"Pug" Welby, as he was nicknamed, was a clever little

fellow, who used the profession as a convenience to himself, but was in his own person no convenience to the profession.

"How are you, eh?" said Pug, looking round, and smiling with a patronising air at the rest of the mess. "I've come on board about some cursed stores."

"Sit down, and have some wine," said Clarion. "Is there any news?"

"Nothing particular. By the bye, that little 'Viper' came in last night from Candia. We snubbed Tinsley about some blunder he made." By "we" Pug meant the admiral, to whose ship he belonged. 'Tis an ambitious *façon de parler* that some flag-ship officers are apt to assume.

Singleton looked up at the speaker, and threw his book aside.

"Good wine this," said Pug. "Do you get your wine from Shaw and Maxwell? Well, Tinsley has applied for an officer to be lent to him. None of our fellows will go—I should fancy not, indeed."

"Hillo! where are you off to, Fontenoy?" cried Snigg, as Singleton rose abruptly from the table.

"On deck," said Singleton, briefly. We will accompany him. He hunted up the captain's steward, and sent in by him his compliments to Captain Pannikin, and begged an interview with him.

It was most graciously granted. Captain Pannikin was in his inner cabin, gazing in a fit of intellectual abstraction at the barometer. He kindly asked Singleton to sit down—thus, with the condescension of a great man, relieving the embarrassment which his visitor was likely to labour under in his exalted presence.

"Captain Pannikin," said Fontenoy, "I learn that there is a junior office wanted on board the 'Viper.' I have come to ask you, as a favour, if you will allow me to be transferred to her."

"What!—wanting to leave *my* ship—Mr. Fontenoy, hem!" Here the captain bristled up with a look of parental reproach.

"Sir," said Singleton, with a Johnsonian air, "to deny that I am indebted to you for great kindness would be impossible if it were attempted, and ungrateful if it were possible."

Pannikin stared.

"But, sir, it is from you that I have learnt that professional zeal which alone prompts this request."

Pannikin blushed!

"On board a large ship there is not the chance of seeing active service, and acquiring knowledge, that there is in a small one."

Pannikin brightened up.

"That is why I wish to join the 'Viper,' sir, and desire your aid in doing so."

"Very well, Mr. Fontenoy. You're quite right—quite right. I'll have you lent to her. You're a promising officer, sir," said Pannikin, while Poor Singleton would have roared with laughter if he had dared. "You don't smoke; you are not extravagant; you ain't a dandy, and you keep your log written up, hem!"

This enumeration of the captain's list of professional virtues was nearly fatal to Fontenoy's self-possession. However, he bowed, and blushed *à discretion*, and shortly afterwards withdrew.

"Well, well," ejaculated the captain, as the door closed behind him, "what is the service coming to, ugh? Impossible, if attempted—ungrateful, if possible, hem! By Jupiter Ammon, the youngsters now-a-days speak like the candidates at Pot-borough!"

With which (not complimentary) reflection on Singleton's address to him, Pannikin thought for a little of Potborough, then rang his bell, and ordered his gig to be manned. Every naval captain keeps that great symbol of respectability.

So next day came an order on board that Mr. Fontenoy was to be discharged to the "Viper." The captain gave him a certificate, which, besides stating that he had behaved with diligence, sobriety, and attention, and was always obedient to command (the regular formula), furthermore contained Captain Pannikin's opinion that he was a "gallant, promising, and well-behaved officer."

The first cutter was manned, and his chest hoisted into it. His servant, Geordie Webb, the marine, was in a state of maudlin sorrow. As Singleton turned to go on deck, he saw Box. Box called him aside, and they retired into a corner of the after-cockpit.

"You're going, old fellow," said Box, with a most melancholy expression. "We've always been good friends. Now, you must accept this as a remembrance." Here he produced a little emerald ring.

"Oh—I can't think of——"

"You *must* take it, old boy. Besides, it ain't much odds. I got it on tick, and need not pay for six months," said Box, seriously.

Singleton laughed—accepted the *μνημόσυνον*—and went to bid his messmates good-bye.

"Good-bye, Snigg" (Snigg was pretending to cry, with considerable comic power). "Good-bye, Somers—good-bye, Lord Clarion—bye, Lovell—bye, Strawberry," &c. &c.

Off went the cutter. The brig was lying near the mouth of the harbour, with her fore-topsail loose. She was evidently

preparing for flight immediately. The "Patagonian's" boat glided promptly alongside. Singleton jumped on board, and there found Commander Tinsley.

"Ha—it's you, is it—returned like the dog to his what-d'ye-call-it!" said the commander. "Whip on the mainyard for the chest."

The chest was hoisted in, and swung gloomily over the side,—something like a coffin—as Singleton could not help fancying.

The brig weighed,—crowded on all sail as usual,—and ran away, through the narrow, lofty, winding entrance of the bay, with great speed. Once more there burst upon Singleton's sight the blue plain of the Mediterranean. Beautiful is the aspect of the sea, which washes so many empires!

Singleton speedily descended to the berth. There was Welwyn. He was sitting reading a letter. Singleton's eye involuntarily fell upon it, and caught the word *Fontenoy*. It was perfectly involuntary. He saw no more,—but that he did see that word he was quite certain.

"Welwyn!"

Welwyn looked up surprised and, as he met Singleton's eyes, a shade discomposed. "What,—Mr. Fontenoy! Let me see: we met at——Ah! I remember. How are you? I had——"

"You had forgotten me?" said Singleton, with a gay smile, holding out his hand.

"No," said Welwyn, calmly. Then, he put away the letters and papers which were lying before him. "So, you have joined us, eh?"

"Yes."

"That is odd. We have but few attractions here."

Singleton said nothing. He thought otherwise. He was wonderfully interested in Welwyn's character. He was so tranquil, without being cold; apparently so full of goodness, yet never betraying emotion. There was something in his serenity altogether novel. It was not the indifference of the *nil admirari* school—which Singleton disliked quite as much as the great and good Dr. Arnold did—and which certainly comprises a class of persons peculiarly objectionable in our day. Then, Singleton had formed an idea from the two strange circumstances he had so curiously observed, both times that he had been on board the "Viper," that Welwyn knew something of his family. But the solution of this, he left to time and opportunity.

"Well," said Welwyn, after a pause, "I hope you will find this a pleasant ship." Here, Brunt and Simms came into the berth, and both expressed their pleasure at having him as a messmate

Meanwhile, the boy made preparations for dinner. The bull's-eye, which lighted the berth, at that instant suffered a temporary eclipse. This was just as the dinner—a glorious pillau of fowls and rice, white, hot, and savoury, was placed on the table, with fragments of egg dotting it here and there, like crocuses peeping through snow!

"Boy," said Brunt, "run on deck, and see what's on the bull's-eye. By heavens—it's shameful! The light of that bull's-eye is constantly being eclipsed, Mr. Fontenoy, either by the shadow of an idiot, or the intervention of a coil of rope. I wish they would 'shuffle off that mortal coil."

"Ah, doctor——," said little Simms,—"firing off a favourite joke in honour of the new messmate, eh?"

"It's worthy of the pillau—and that's worthy of the Shah of Persia," said Singleton, joyously.

"Will you join me in a glass of wine, Fontenoy?" said Brunt. "Do you like lácrima—and which do you prefer—the red or the bianca!"

Singleton stared. This was strong for a small craft! Little Simms, unperceived by him, stole a glance with his quick, blue eyes at Brunt, who looked very demure.

"The white!" said Singleton, gaily. "I shall always mark this day with a white stone, and why not with a white wine?"

"Bravo!" said Brunt. The wine made its appearance.

"Welwyn, can't you join us—and Simms too, eh?" said Singleton.

"I don't drink generally," said Welwyn. "Nevertheless, I have no churlish objection to one glass."

So the mess joined in a comprehensive "wine:" the lácrima was capital. The little brig bounded gaily, and the waves seemed to chuckle against her sides. The whole scene was so new and refreshing to Singleton, after the monotony of the "Patagonian," that his spirits rose—brisk and delicious as a breeze from the Cyclades.

"How well you live in this mess," he said, as the servant put on some fine fruit and a bottle of claret.

"Yes," said Brunt, carelessly. "You line-of-battle-ship fellows think we are barbarians in small crafts: it is not so. Do you favour the peaceful olive—fair plant of Minerva?"

"Yes."

"Simms, what does Byron call olives?" said Brunt.

"The simple olive, best ally of wine,"

said little Simms, with a schoolboy air.

"Very good," said Brunt. "I am gradually instructing him in literature, you see, Fontenoy."

Simms looked up gratefully, and smiled. There was a childish simplicity, combined with quickness and delicacy, about the little fellow, that won Singleton's heart.

"I wish him well through the Byron epoch," said Singleton, laughing. "I had the Byron fever a couple of years ago: we all have."

Welwyn looked at him curiously.

"Yes," said he. "And, by the bye, I am sorry to see that shopboys and fast-men have taken to reading him, because they hope to enjoy some immorality. This is bad. Poor Byron,—he is punished by their applause!"

Evening came on; they all went on deck. There was a delicious free-and-easiness about the officers of the "Viper." The stern-grating was turned into a kind of divan. Tinsley, with a long beard—his last offence against discpline—sat there and smoked a nargilly, lighted by a ship's boy in quite an oriental fashion. Lieutenant Bobus did the same. Welwyn mounted a fez, and smoked a chibouque with a cherry tube. Brunt patronised a cheroot with a little opium in it. Singleton "put on a weed," as his commander recommended him. And they all gathered round Tinsley, as round a pasha, and held edifying converse.

The breeze was lively, and the water smooth. To leeward appeared an island which gleamed like ivory in the last smile of the dying day: mosques and minarets peeped from it, and glistened in the sunset, which baptized them with fire. It was Rhodes!

The breeze—the murmur of the sea—the island—the sweetness and freshness of all around—made Singleton thrill with pleasure. He moved away from the group of officers, and, standing upon the gangway-ladder, gazed around with gladness and joy: he seemed to drink in the glory of the setting sun.

"Ah!" he muttered, "I shall be very happy on board here!"

As he spoke, the sun sank suddenly, and darkness began to creep over the sea.

BOOK III.

THE PUPIL.

CHAPTER I.

I could not help flattering myself, with the joy that I should have, in viewing the very place and scene of those important events . . . in treading that ground when at every step we . . cannot help setting a foot on the memorial of some celebrated action.

CONYERS MIDDLETON. "Letter from Rome." (Grant's new edition, 1847.)

MORNING found H.M.'s brig "Viper" hovering in a fresh breeze about Rhodes, like one of the swallows which the gay people of that beautiful isle welcomed in summer, in the olden time, with revelry and song. Singleton had the morning watch: he saw the symbols of Turkish dominion glittering in the town —minarets like spears, and little cupolas like the breasts of budding womanhood! It was a delightful spectacle. According to the instructions left him through Welwyn, whom he relieved at four o'clock, he bore up for the harbour—trimmed sails—and went below to call Commander Tinsley. This is a curious duty, that devolves upon junior officers: they are obliged to call the lieutenant of the next watch—the commander at a certain time—and so on. The orthodox plan is, to pop the lantern close to the eyes of the sleeper, and roar out the hour in a loud voice. This, to be sure, irritates your friend; but it is effectual. He cannot venture to go to sleep again, and then come up, half an hour late, and tell the officer he has to relieve; that the "midshipman did not call him properly." This ingenious little plan was the fruit of the genius of Lieutenant Bulbous, of the "Snob," who deserves great credit for an invention so felicitous.

Singleton descended the companion-ladder at three bells (half-past five) to call Tinsley in due form. He found him wrapped up like a hedgehog in his crib, and slumbering in a torpid state. The atmosphere of the cabin was pervaded by brandy-and-watery gases, so potent that it was scarcely safe to trust yourself in it with any lantern but one of the safety-lanterns of the great Sir Humphrey Davy. The pasha was not visible, except—that is—

a little gleam of red from his nightcap, which peeped out. Singleton modestly shook him by the shoulder. "Captain Tinsley—three bells!" No answer. "Three bells—Captain Tinsley!" Still the great man slumbered; but some low grumblings convinced Singleton that he had succeeded in awakening the gunroom officers, and presently Block, the master, came in. Block knew his master's habits, and in a surprising manner dug in his knuckles just at that part of the counterpane where the sleeper's ribs might be supposed to be. With a heavy grunt, Tinsley returned to consciousness; he turned his red face to Fontenoy,—"Well, ugh, youngster—what news?"

Singleton told him; told him that it was a fine morning, and that the brig was standing in to the harbour.

"Take her in, Block," said Tinsley. Block went on deck; Fontenoy was following.

"Wait a minute, youngster; light that." Singleton looked round, and saw arranged an apparatus for preparing hot coffee; he set fire to the spirits of wine as directed. It was a capital contrivance, by which the commander provided himself a cup of coffee, ready as soon as he put on his clothes. There was another contrivance to make the refreshment complete; it consisted solely of a bottle of brandy in a corner. By the simplest process possible, the coffee received from this its final preparation.

Singleton was once more about to go:

"Younker!"

"Yes, sir."

"Do I want shaving?" said the commander.

Commander Tinsley did want shaving, unquestionably, for his beard was now long, and his mustachios thick; but Singleton thought it best to say, "Not at all, as far as his judgment was concerned;" and managed after this to effect his retreat. When he gained the deck, he found Block conducting the brig into the harbour, and in half an hour she anchored very quietly there. The hands who had not been turned up before were now summoned to furl sails; this was soon done. The gunner took charge of the forenoon watch, and all the officers prepared to go on shore. This was all very free-and-easy, and Singleton began to think that the "Viper" was very like a privateer.

Presently, a quarantine boat came near them, to ascertain where the "Viper" was from. A loud laugh summoned Singleton from the berth, where he had been looking after some breakfast. He and Simms ran on deck to see what was going forward in the way of fun. Commander Tinsley was on the side-ladder, amusing himself at the expense of the man in the boat.

"Vare you frum?" said the man.

"*Bono!*" cried Tinsley, pretending not to understand him.

"I speaks *Inglese*, vy you no speak *Inglese?*" cried the unfortunate officer.

"*Bono, bono,*" said the commander, nodding his head.

The man was about to pull away in disgust, and probably declare the brig in quarantine, but a rope was flung into his boat, and she was drawn alongside very smartly, like a hooked salmon; so that, if the brig had been put in quarantine, this functionary must have shared it with her, which probably opened his eyes to the satisfactory nature of the commander's explanations. He departed, ten minutes afterwards, highly contented, and the "Vipers," as they used to call themselves, had full access to the shore.

A boat from the shore soon came off, and brought some *yaoort* for breakfast, which they partook of in the midshipman's berth with much relish. With some good brown sugar, this said *yaoort* is one of the best things for breakfast I know, and well worthy a journey to the East to taste. It is something like curds and cream, but ten times better; better than Italian cream,—better than blanc-mange,—better than the clotted cream of Devonshire. Anastasius (the brilliant Anastasius, as De Quincey well calls him)—he whose book is a union of "Tom Jones" and "Tancred," and perhaps more philosophical than either—calls *yaoort* a "sort of Turkish cream-cheese;" but all the *yaoort* I ever saw (and I have entered pretty deeply into it), differed from any cream-cheese, not only in flavour but in consistency. It floweth from the can in which the Greek brings it, like water from the rock,—a spring of life and joy. Like the rich flowing verse of Tennyson,—like sweet words from the lips of ——, thou camest to me, oh, *yaoort*, in the olden time! Thou wert lovely in a lovely land, and pleasant amongst a pleasant company! The dream is over! Let us go on.

"Well—who is going on shore?" inquired Singleton, after the *yaoort* was disposed of. "Welwyn, will you come with me?"

"Thank you," said Welwyn, quietly, "I am going alone."

"What say you, Brunt?" Singleton asked.

"Wait, till I have looked at my list, and reported to Flibb."

Flibb was the surgeon of the vessel, but he did not know his work half so well as his assistant, who entertained a most unmitigated contempt for him. But Brunt was one of those quiet, hard fellows, who never show such feelings, and he paid Flibb great external civility; for, as he philosophically remarked to Fontenoy, in confidence, when they began to grow intimate, "it was very lucky Flibb was only a fool, for he might have been a rogue."

Brunt now went out to his dispensary—a wretched little hole,

half the size of the boatswain's cabin, on the lower deck, and certainly a fine place for a scientific man, who wrote (as Brunt did) for half the medical journals, and was fond of chemical experiments. Here, he had a few shelves of little bottles, a mortar destitute of a pestle, and two towels. He had no place for his books, except his chest, and his share of the berth; and as for keeping up his knowledge of dissection, he never had an opportunity, of course.

"Oh!" he said to Fontenoy, "when we go to Malta—won't I luxuriate in the hospital dead-house!" Saying this, he dived into his dispensary for a quill with caustic in it, with which he proceeded delicately to touch up the wound of one of his sick-list. Singleton stood by. The fellow roared suddenly, "Mr. Brunt, sir! Mr. Brunt."

"Be quiet, you bull," said Brunt. "A curious thing, pain, isn't it, Fontenoy?—There, that will do!" As he said this, he bandaged the patient's leg with the neatness with which a shop-boy ties up a parcel, and dismissed him.

Just as he was turning to get ready to go on shore, a message from Tinsley summoned Fontenoy to the presence. The commander wanted to take him on shore with him.

"Do you speak Turkish, Mr. Fontenoy?" he said.

"No, sir," said Singleton, surprised.

"Oh, I didn't know what you youngsters might know, now-a-days;—the service is coming to such a pitch. But get ready to come on shore with me—I'm going to beat up the pasha!"

Such was the familiar phrase with which the commander intimated his intention of waiting on that dignified Osmanli, the Pasha of Rhodes. Tinsley thought nothing of coolly "beating up" any foreign functionary from a Pasha of three tails to a Bimbashi—secure in his nautical rank, and his own personal self-possession, which last was enormous. First, he had the pride of an Englishman abroad; secondly, he had the conceit of a sailor; thirdly, he was conscious of his rank as commander; and fourthly, of his merits as Commander Tinsley. Add to this, his cerebral peculiarities arising from his service on the "coast," and you will not be surprised that he sometimes did things which nothing but that great dread of English power which (more than any moral respect for us) gives us our position abroad, prevented from being attended by very serious consequences. I grieve to say that the indistinct notion that Englishmen form of the nature of an Oriental *harem* (not choosing to remember that it is simply an Oriental "home") was cherished by Commander Tinsley in its full indistinctness, and led to his once or twice committing——but why dwell on these painful details? "Call away the gig!"

The gig was manned. Singleton jumped in first—according to etiquette,—and Tinsley followed—the side being piped as usual. They shoved off, and reached the shore. Then, away they went to the dwelling of Abdallah Pasha—a handsome but not pretentious building.

"A snug crib!" said Tinsley to his aide-de-camp, coolly, "Very likely the old fellow's feeding—we'll take a kabob with him, in a friendly way!—Hoy—you there—Yahoo!"

This last was addressed to an Arnaoot of the pasha's body-guard, who was lounging at the entrance inside the courtyard. The Arnaoot looked up, gave a quick, sharp glance at the speaker, twirled his mustachios, and disappeared inside.

"He'll know us again, I fancy," said the commander. And then he glanced round inquisitively about him, and remarked that the building was not half so good as the houses in Jermyn Street. It is very odd that some people, if they go to the World's End, can never get out of the West End! Tinsley was one of these. If you had taken him to the Grand Signior's Divan at Stamboul, he would have been mentally all the while in the Cigar Divan in the Strand!

"Well, I say, they're keeping us waiting," he said, impatiently. However, at that moment an official appeared, and motioned to them with much courtesy of gesture to follow. They did so; Tinsley all the while making observations to Fontenoy on people and things about, with the utmost easiness.

A curtain was drawn aside, and they entered the chamber of the pasha—an old man with a white beard, somewhat marked by the small-pox, and with quick, bright eyes. Singleton, who had studied the works of that valuable body of men, our Oriental travellers, had some intention of endeavouring to conform to usages of etiquette. He was so anxious to appear properly attentive, that he would have willingly prostrated himself in the most approved style of slaves, if it would have looked at all civil. Not so Tinsley, who walked coolly up the chamber to where the pasha was sitting, and bowed in an off-hand style, as if he was on his own quarter-deck. So well defined and so formal are the regulations of Eastern etiquette, that probably the commander made ten distinct blunders in the first five minutes. Nevertheless, the pasha showed no sign of surprise, was as quiet, dignified, and polite as a judge. Singleton followed his commander, devoutly trusting that the pasha would see that he was an inferior, and hoping that in some confused way the old man would fancy that he was obliged to imitate him, under pain of the bastinado. Meanwhile, Tinsley was quite at his ease—wrapped up in a good-natured contempt of the pasha.

Why should Tinsley have despised the pasha? The pasha

knew Turkish as well as Tinsley did his own language: and Arabic better than he did any of the continental ones. He had distinguished himself in war while Tinsley was a boy; and lived more in accordance with the laws of Islamism than Tinsley did with those of *his* religion. If he *had* four wives, they were all better treated than poor Mrs. Tinsley; and his female slaves were scarcely so numerous as the delicate damsels who had amused the leisure of the commander in the dregs of European towns!

The interpreter attended, and looked at Tinsley. The pasha waved his hand, and the room was cleared.

"Tell him I'm glad to see him looking so doosed well! A fine old boy, isn't he, Fontenoy," said the commander. The interpreter looked at the pasha. The pasha gave a slight glance at the interpreter.

"Parlez Français, Monsieur le Capitaine, s'il vous plaît," said the interpreter, politely.

"Oh, he don't understand English! That's a pretty interpreter, isn't it, Mr. Fontenoy?" (Here the interpreter said something to the pasha.)

"Très-bien, très-bien!" said Tinsley to the interpreter, waving his hand majestically, and breaking out into French, with fatal volubility. "J'espère que son Altesse le Pasha se porte à merveille." Tinsley then went on talking to Fontenoy again, "Upon my word, a very nice room! Would he show me his harem, I wonder?"

Singleton happened to glance at the interpreter (a Candiote) just as the commander said this, and saw that he turned deadly pale. Singleton formed a suspicion of his own, from the circumstance. However, the man simply replied, on the part of the pasha, that he was glad to see the captain, and added, further, some congratulations on the late war against the Viceroy of Egypt.

"All very satisfactory," said Tinsley to Fontenoy. "Bien, bono, mon ami l'interprête. Vous parlez Turc comme trois cent mille diables. Fontenoy, he will surely offer us a pipe!"

The interpreter and pasha interchanged a few words. The pasha clapped his hands. Pipes and coffee were brought. They seated themselves, Tinsley plumping down on the divan in a wonderful manner. As he remarked, "this was what he called comfortable." And he praised the pipes wonderfully also, and was in high good-humour.

"A remarkable people, the English, tell the pasha," he said; "*bien extraordinaire!*"

"The pasha is thoroughly persuaded of it," said the interpreter, a little drily.

And thus this memorable interview went off, the pasha all the while treating his eccentric guest with the most dignified politeness and consideration; so that Singleton, knowing the mysterious interest which the Turks attach to madmen, began to think that it was partly to it that the commander owed his indulgent reception! They rose to take their leave; Tinsley, with much hospitality, assuring the pasha, through the interpreter, that "he would be very glad to see him at Brick Lodge, if he should happen to be in Yorkshire!"

When they left the house, the commander returned on board, giving permission to Fontenoy to amuse himself on shore.

The Turkish power is like ivy; it has a languid vitality among ruins. Like ivy, its green flag hangs sluggishly over scenes of decay. And here, in Rhodes, as elsewhere, it maintains a feeble and useless existence amidst the works of the dead past. The Greek is gone; the Roman is gone; the gallant Knights of St. John are gone. And over the degenerate descendants of those who welcomed the swallow with a hymn of joy, rule the degenerate descendants of those who under Solyman the Magnificent, conquered the Christian knights.*

Conquered the Christian knights! It is a melancholy history, and they deserve a better epitaph. Let our thoughts wander for a moment to the spring of the year 1522, when the wise and gallant Philip Villiers de L'Isle Adam, that worthy French knight, was chosen Grand Master of the Order, and came to Rhodes to take the command. The harbour of Gallipoli, and the whole shores of the Sea of Marmora, resounded with the hum of preparations for war; and Italy and proud Venice looked with awe at the gathering cloud; and Christendom watched, with eager eyes, the great Solyman, who, the autumn before, had carried his triumphant arms from the Bosphorus to the Danube, and hoisted his victorious crescent on the towers of Belgrade.

The gallant gentlemen of the Order, whose ancient blood was warmed by Christian zeal, prepared for their defence against the hordes of the magnificent barbarian. A muster of their forces showed about 5,000 free men able to bear arms, amongst whom were 600 knights of the Order, and 500 soldiers of Crete. The rest were mariners, and the people of the island. "The former," says the old historian,† "did great service." The island people

* They took possession of the city (after six months' siege) on Christmas-day, 1522. See the excellent account of the whole expedition in old Knolles' "History of the Turks" (published in 1810), pp. 569 to 600. (3rd edition, printed by A. Islip, 1621.)

† Knolles, *ubi sup.* (p. 575). For Dr. Johnson's high opinion of Knolles, see "Rambler," No. 122.

"served to little other purpose than to dig and carry earth to the ramparts." The citizens "were for the most part weak and of small courage."

Nevertheless, there were 600 knights of the Order; 600 of the chivalry of Christ! They called the degenerate Greeks within the walls of the town; they raised ramparts; they loaded granaries. And above all towered the holy cross on the church of their patron, St. John. And, mark one item of the preparations: their Grand Master "did oftentimes spend the greatest part of the night in the church alone, praying, his head-piece, gorget, and gauntlets lying by him; so that it was commonly said, that his devout praiers and carefulnesse would make the citie invincible." What a touching and beautiful picture!

Summer came, and on the 26th June, early in the morning,—doubtless just as figs were ripe and olives green,—there was seen from the towers a great spectacle. Over that warm, blue sea, rippling under a fresh westerly breeze, came a huge fleet of Turkish galleys, stretching all along the coast of old Lycia, with the crescent flying. The Rhodians crowded on their battlements to see the enemy pass, and waved their sacred ensigns, and public prayers were offered to the Christian's God. The Othomans landed their force to the eastward of the city. And now everything was ready for an attack by sea and land.

Meanwhile, the Order begged help from Christendom against the great foe. None was to be obtained from the pope,—none from the Emperor Charles Fifth,—none from the great Francis First,—none from our King Harry, Defender of the Faith! Those were stirring times in Europe. Luther was in Wittemberg, busy with friend Melancthon in preparing his version of the New Testament, and in trying to save the Reformation from the violence of Anabaptist fanatics, endangering it by their movement. Perhaps it was consistent that kings who would not allow Christianity to be reformed in Europe, should not care to defend it in Rhodes. Be that as it may, the Order had to fight its battle unaided. Six hundred Christian gentlemen against Solyman the Magnificent, with an army and a fleet! It was a glorious struggle! It went on for six months. Solyman's forces in countless numbers dashed against the walls like a stormy sea—breaking, perishing, but ever renewed. It must have been a noble spectacle! to see the lilies of France waving from the tower of the French knights, brave Abbin commanding; the eagle gleaming from the tower of the Germans; our own English standard from the bulwark of the English (which brave De L'Isle Adam himself presided at), and the flags of the Augvernois, the Spaniards, and the Italians! The battles were daily, bloody, and violent. On the 4th September, in one

assault, 2,000 Turks were slain, and fifty of the knights! Honour be to the memory of the brave knight Francis Fornove of France!

He was always for holding out to the last, and with his own hand slew 500 Turks (said one who was present), with shot from St. George's Tower, during the siege!

On the whole, perhaps, history can furnish no better battle-piece than this chivalrous defence. Solyman was several times on the point of abandoning the attack, and his proud soul made him pine and sicken with impatience and disgrace. At last, direct assaults were abandoned in despair. A patient system of attacking the walls by means of trenches was carried on with indomitable perseverance; the numbers of the Turks were overwhelming; and the knights having fought with heroism, had nothing left but to surrender with dignity. It was done. The fierce Solyman had learnt from the sight of such noble enemies to be magnanimous. He suffered the Grand Master and the survivors to depart with their property. They braved the winter weather in their galleys, and finally settled in Malta, in 1530. Brave De l'Isle Adam died there in 1534. Honour to his memory! He was a grand old knight of a heaven-taught school, and well, indeed, might he and such as he be bewailed in the glorious language of Burke. The Knights of St. John were the last of the chivalry of Europe. They performed their part well, and well may they sleep in the vaults of the church of their patron in Malta. 'Tis a fit resting-place.

And they *do* sleep well. Christians kneel to worship on the flag-stones containing their epitaphs, and prayer is ever ascending from their graves!

CHAPTER II.

On yonder mound the Oread was adored,
In yonder tree the Dryad held her home,
And from her urn the gentle Naiad poured.
The wavelet's silver foam.
SCHILLER'S "Gods of Greece." (Sir E. B. Lytton's Translation.)

"A TENDER and not unpleasing melancholy is the characteristic of Rhodes. Sweetness of climate wonderfully softens the aspect of ruin; and the dead cities of the East seem to lie in state. Rhodes is melancholy—but with the tenderness of Otway, and the softness of Gray!"

Thus mused Singleton Fontenoy, as having parted from his commander, he passed from the gay haunts of the Rhodians of to-day, and found himself wandering amidst the crumbling dwellings of the knights. To this hour, you may see these deso-

late abodes, with the escutcheons of their gallant owners, gracefully carved in front. The number of Frenchmen in the order must have been large, for everywhere the *fleur de lis* blossoms in stone there. As Singleton passed up a kind of sloping street, he perceived a figure before him. Advancing, he found that it was Welwyn, sketching. Welwyn had shown, on one or two occasions, such a love of solitude, that Singleton wished to avoid all appearance of intrusion, and was about to move away. Welwyn looked up, however, and beckoned him to join him. Singleton did so, and esteemed the invitation a great favour. As he joined him, Welwyn coolly continued filling in some details with his pencil, while Singleton stood by in respectful attention.

"Melancholy among ruins, eh?" said Singleton.

"No. That is the charasteristic of the owl," Welwyn replied, "the moping owl that doth to the moon complain, as you know."

"Why I should have thought that with your imaginative tendencies, you would have been sad among the wrecks of two civilizations."

Welwyn rose, closed his sketch-book, and adjusted his cap. "Let us take a walk." They strolled along, and gained a position higher up, which commanded a view both of the town and the sea, under favourable circumstances. Here Welwyn sat down again, and Singleton beside him. It was just drawing near the close of the afternoon.

"I am going to shock your 'imaginative tendencies' by smoking a pipe here," said Welwyn, pulling out the instrument in question, and tumbling in a quantity of Latakia to the capacious bowl.

"With all my heart," said Singleton, laughing.

Welwyn carefully filled the bowl with the choice weed, lighted it, and raising himself on his elbow, puffed out a blue curl, and began:—

"You ask me if I am sad among these ruins—my friend, in the world there is nothing sad——"

Singleton stared as this paradox made its appearance, and wondered why, if what he said was true, his companion was often so gloomy and lonely himself.

"Understand me! ["Not so easy!" thought Singleton.] I do not mean to say that all the world are happy! Heaven forbid! Happiness," said Welwyn, blowing out a puff of smoke with a contemptuous air, "is a paltry thing! Indeed, I cannot fancy any being more *miserable* than a man who is habitually *happy!*"

Singleton laughed, pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, sniffed

his favourite violet, and screwed up his attention to listen with a determined air.

"To eat, drink, and sleep well—to have an affectionate wife—and moderate pleasures—this men call happiness—an equable condition apparently compounded of prudence and a good digestion. Nay, Paley seems to have found an analogy between human happiness and that of an oyster *—an idea quite in accordance with the tone of his philosophy! But think you that it was under the influence of such paltry ideas that men did what men remember? Was it a love of 'happiness' that took Godfrey de Bouillon and his cross-adorned army through Asia Minor and Palestine? Did it prompt the monastic institution—the penance and the prayer of that brave society among whose crumbling palaces I am smoking this pipe? Did it found and propagate the religion they professed? Did it originate the Reformation? See Luther in his cell at Erfurth, and answer!"

"Happiness—our being's end and aim," muttered Singleton, abstractedly.

"'Tis a beggarly philosophy, scarce two hundred years old," † said Welwyn, his pale face flushing slightly as his enthusiasm warmed.

"Let there be light," said Singleton. "Where is the melancholy in that sublime saying? The remark is not mine—it is Bulwer's, in a note to his novel of 'Paul Clifford.'"

"Light presupposes darkness," replied his friend, a little staggered. "But look you, Fontenoy, there is something higher than happiness!—there is a blessedness—as one of my teachers says. I am not defending mere worldly discontent. I speak only of the melancholy attending high aspiration—the 'desire of the moth for the star,' to use Shelley's words."

Singleton paused for a moment. Then he said, "Pardon me, Welwyn, but you appear to me inconsistent. This conversation began by your saying that these ruins inspired you with *no* melancholy!"

"I am not careful to justify myself," said Welwyn, rather loftily, in the words of another of his teachers;‡ "but I will tell you why I said so. Why should we so much regard the past when we have here the soul from which came all? We are not sufficiently independent. We miserably hang on to what is dead. It is *we* who are the miracle and the wonder. Nay, properly, nothing can be said to exist by any man for a certainty but his *ego*—the divine part of him. For my part, I look on even my own body as a phenomenon."

* Paley's "Moral Philosophy," book i. cap. 6th (concluding paragraph.)

† Carlyle. ‡ Emerson.

"And on me as a phenomenon, too," said Singleton, laughing, and flinging a pebble at an old column there.

"Certainly. You and all men can only be secondary existences in comparison with my consciousness of the existence of my soul."

"Well," said Singleton, sighing, and stretching out his arms, "these speculations are apt to give a man a headache. But one is always better for them. I thank you for your rather misty remarks. Pray go on."

Welwyn had lain back abstractedly for a moment. He now blew out a long puff of smoke, and, looking earnestly at his friend, proceeded:—

"Ah, Fontenoy, there is a philosophy spreading now among the intellectual which looks in society for love, and in nature for God. In its eyes the world itself is only a dream, and man, what Jeremy Taylor calls him, 'a phantasm of time.'"

"I myself," said Singleton, interrupting him, "have been visited by gleams of such ideas. They first impelled me to wander. I did wander—and well! here I am in Rhodes, as restless, perturbed, and unsatisfied as I was in Rockshire! But other ideas, too, prompted me——"

Here he paused. The circumstances before narrated, which had led him to fancy that Welwyn knew something of his family, and might possibly be able to solve the mystery regarding his mother, which had exercised so painful an influence on his mind, suddenly rushed to his memory. Now was the time to make the trial of Welwyn's knowledge.

"By the bye, Welwyn," he said, abruptly, and as carelessly as he could, "when we first met, you seemed to know something about my family."

"Your family!—I thought we were talking of philosophy!" said Welwyn, haughtily.

"True," said Singleton, colouring, and preserving his calmness.

"Man," resumed Welwyn,—"only a phantasm of time! This philosophy is at war with almost every existing institution, conceiving them to have lost for the most part the divine ideas which were their creators. It is, therefore, in favour of what is called the movement; but mark! we are not Radicals in the ordinary sense of the word. We are not destroyers, but renewers. We respect Conservatism as a philosophical fact, which represents, too, a sacred idea."

"Hillo!—expounding the Sybilline books?" cried a loud hearty voice at this moment. They looked up. Welwyn broke off, and their two messmates, Brunt and Simms, approached. There was something in the active aspect of the surgeon which

dispelled the visions of the transcendentalist. Singleton jumped up and welcomed them.

"Well, Fontenoy, has Welwyn been initiating you in the mysteries of the modern prophets? I have brought Simms on shore to give him lessons, and I have been telling him to take a leap, that he may brag of it when he gets home. There is a fable somewhere in Æsop about a fellow who took a wonderful leap at Rhodes."

"Do we sail to-night?" inquired Welwyn.

"Not if I can help it," said Brunt.

"You help it?" said Fontenoy, laughing. "What has a medico to do with the ship's sailing?"

"Only this. Tinsley consulted me about his health, and I've given him a dose that will keep him quiet till the morning."

"What a shame!"

"Not at all. I believe he's half cracked, and it's my duty to look after him. One day he would have flogged half the ship's company. I bled him. Sir, I govern the 'Viper' by my lancet and pill-box."

"You ought to be pounded in your own mortar," said Welwyn, laughing. "But where is your superior officer—Flibb, the surgeon?"

"On board. I wonder he didn't want to go on shore to make geological experiments. Do you know, Fontenoy, what he does sometimes? He'll go and pick up a piece of marble among the ruins of a temple, and enter in his note-book that he found a *stratum* of it! Oh, he's a wonderful old fellow! Simms, don't laugh! Remember, sir, never to laugh at your superior officers." Thus Brunt used to make up for turning the said superior officers into ridicule.

At this moment it was drawing towards the close of day; so the "Vipers" returned on board to dinner in a boat pulled by a Greek. They reported themselves to the first lieutenant (the only lieutenent the brig at that time boasted), Mr. Bobus. He was a very celebrated officer all through the profession—I mean that he was known to be one of the fattest men in the whole navy. And a naval reputation is one of the widest that a man can enjoy; for consider that we have ships everywhere, and you will see that a naval celebrity is known from the eternally-frozen regions where our wonderful Polar expeditions go, down to the wide Canadian lakes; thence all through the West Indies, all round Great Britain, in the Baltic, from the Straits to the Archipelago in the Mediterranean, on the coast of Africa, in South America, and in the East Indies! Thus Bobus was spoken of as "fat Bobus" wherever man has penetrated almost. His name was more ex-

tended and talked about, perhaps, than that of any illustrious person now living. Such is fame!

When the mess were once more installed in the berth, dinner was discussed. Singleton found out that the lácrima (both white and red) had disappeared, and the claret also. The truth was, that there had been exactly one bottle of each of these in the mess, which Brunt had produced to give an air of splendour to Singleton's first dinner. He laughed when our hero stared at the change. But Singleton laughed with him; he did not care about faring sumptuously, and he smiled good-naturedly when Welwyn quoted from Emerson, that "a man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work."

In the evening, that "amber fluid" which Government supplies to the navy was placed upon the table. Simms, who had been humming an air for some time, suddenly struck up the following song, which he called—

THE ROVER TO ISABEL.

"Yes, yes, Sweet, thou art fair,
But so is the wind!—and my bark is there.
As my hand with thy flaxen tresses pale,
Plays the amorous breeze with the flagging sail.

Look, Sweet, at the golden moon
As bright and as round as a new doubloon?
Like the path that it makes across the sea
Is the life that thy love has lighted for me.

Soon, now must the land be drowned,
And the sea's fairy ring chain my vessel round,
But my heart is a fountain of love, I declare,
And thou art the Naiad that dwellest there.

Still, Sweet, through the grass of spring,
Let thy white ankles gleam like to doves on the wing,
Or, pluck the plump grapes in the torpid sunshine,
From the wall whereon hangeth the crucified vine.

Soon, Sweet, shall my cruise be sped,
So shear me a lock from your worshiped head,
—With those small golden scissors whose radiance rare
Is lost in the light of your heavenly hair!"

"Time to put out the lights, gentlemen!" said the serjeant of marines, coming to the berth door.

"Rum or brandy, serjeant?" inquired Mr. Brunt, with great coolness.

"Neither, sir, if you please."

"With hot water or cold?" added Brunt, imperturbably.

The serjeant relaxed into a smile.

"You're such a facetious gentleman, sir!—Well, I will take the least drop of rum, cold, if you please."

"Facetious!" growled Brunt, after the serjeant withdrew and the light was *not* put out; "I'll teach him what I am, if he goes into the sick-list!"

So saying, Brunt took hold of a volume lying on the table, and adjusted it ingeniously under the bull's-eye, to prevent the light being seen, conspicuous in the darkness on deck, where Lieutenant Bobus was smoking his evening cigar.

The brig left Rhodes next morning, rounded the island to the northward, and—revelling in a strong breeze from the "sweet south"—glided in among the Cyclades. From island to island, as the bee from flower to flower, flew the brig. Whether dressed in the rosy garb of the morning, or splendid in the imperial purple of a Grecian twilight, these isles were always beautiful. That was a happy summer!

She anchored in fragrant Poros—not even made ridiculous by a twopenny Grecian dockyard with one ship in it! It was pleasant to Fontenoy to go on shore, and visit variously among the islands—seeing tender Greek girls, who aped European manners. Poor things! they were houris worthy of such a paradise; but fancy their longing to see London, and pining to wake up from their gorgeous Eastern dreams, to this row and the other terrace—dreary catacombs of bricks—haunts of influenza and *ennui*—whose architects "form squares" with the regularity of military mechanism—the biggest city in the world, and, like some of its heiresses, all ugliness and gold!

The "Viper" anchored at an island which I shall call Enupnion. It is rich, green, and fragrant; it swarms with olives, and blushes with grapes. A vein of marble crosses it. A gash in its bosom forms a bay, the shores of which are covered with lemon-groves. As you lie at anchor in deep water, you see, through the glassy realm, the golden floor of sand far down, with sea-weed as beautiful as flowers waving and curling upwards from its depths. The nightingale sings you to sleep, and fireflies light you to your chamber. Everything seems beautiful. There is inspiration in the odour of the roses, and a smile on the face of the moon at night!

Into the bay of Enupnion glided the brig, one morning early: the wind was light, so the commander cried, "Out sweeps!" The sweeps were got out: they are long, heavy oars, used in small craft sometimes to propel the vessel during a calm, or to aid a light wind. They spread out on each side of the brig like the black wings of the bat. Time was kept by aid of the boatswain's whistle. In glided the brig: she anchored and furled sails; she lay there a fortnight.

* * * Let us fancy ourselves in a plain, airy chamber, having a large window looking out on a garden, with half a dozen orange-trees loaded with the ripe fruit. On one side of the chamber is a long bench, covered with red cushions; there is a table, with some lemonade in gilt glasses. There are several

French chairs in the room: on one of these sits Mr. Fontenoy; on another—a damsel. Her face is dark, flushed with a ray of rosy light playing up and down it; her eyes are intensely black, restless, and glowing, and giving a brilliant life to a face otherwise tinged by an expression of languor as soft as the cheek it dwells on. She has miraculous black hair drooping down, and a little red cap perched on her fair head like a crown. She wears a dress like that of the English, but is enveloped in a wonderful sash of yellow silk, curling round her waist lovingly, and dropping down to her pretty feet, encased in yellow slippers. Such is Adela Mavrosceni, daughter of old Mavrosceni (as I take the liberty of calling him), Greek gentleman and English consul. Signor Mavrosceni (as he loved to be called) was a pompous little politician, who turned pale at the name of Palmerston. The signor did not like the English, but we must make allowances for him—he had married one of them! He married a Miss Simmons, travelling in the Levant as lady's-maid to a yachting countess, whose hair she dressed, which was very proper; but whose travels she wrote, which was decidedly wrong; for the countess published them! They were gorgeously bound. Hacks, the critic (who had been asked to dinner), compared her to De Stael: Snacks (only asked "in the evening") compared her to Mrs. Hemans.

The Signora Mavrosceni having settled in Enupnion, and become somebody, of course frequently sighed after dear England, where she was a lady's-maid. But this made her appear a great personage among the society of the island. "Ah, sar," as Mavrosceni used to say after her death, "she alway say she 'lost' here!—but by St. Nicholas I alway find her too certain!" So saying, he would chuckle, and wheeze, and puff out smoke, and swallow a lump of *rahatlacome* (a capital sweetmeat, by the bye), and peer into the *Journal de Smyrne*, as was his wont. Well, the signora died, and left Adela, aged twelve—very pretty, with a capital knowledge of English, and a thirst for England.

She was now just fifteen, but beautifully developed. In these sweet southern regions, the girls "grow wild," like the fruits and flowers. In England, we grow our damsels, like our melons, shut up, and in *hothouses!*

"Now tell me about England, Signor Fontenoy!" said Adela, for the tenth time, playing with the tassel of her little red cap.

"I tell you, it is not half so pleasant as Enupnion," said Singleton. And I am afraid he was beginning to think so, the rogue! Poor Lalage!

"No, no," said the girl, impatiently. "This is dull, dull, dull. I languish, I die.—Now, pray show me how you make a 'morning call' in England. I am lady of the house—you are a

visitor. Come in, and show me!" As she spoke, she jumped up, coquettishly arranging her cap, and the miraculous hair. Singleton rose too, laughing and delighted, and they proceeded to arrange a little comedy. Adela sat down again, with much dignity. Singleton, having stood in the doorway, walked into the room, bowed, and took a chair.

"Good morning, Miss Mavrosceni."

"Good morning, Mr. Fontenoy."

Here, the wonderful red cap dropped off. Singleton sprang to pick it up, and his cheek was brushed by the miraculous hair. And a new actor suddenly popped in, in the person of the signor.

The consul looked very excited. "Ah, what think you, sar!" And he went on to tell Fontenoy that a party of the brig's crew, who had been allowed to go on shore, had attacked a Greek chapel with a view to help themselves to any little ornaments about the altar that a Protestant could with a clear conscience —pawn. The natives had been furious at the impiety. There had been a row.

"I tell you, it lucky for your commander he is Lord Palmerston's cousin," said the consul.

"The old rogue," thought Singleton, who knew that he was nothing of the sort. In fact, this was a pleasing fiction of Tinsley's, which he broached, privately, to such officials, and which had a highly imposing effect.

"I must go on board!" said Singleton, ruefully, "Good-bye!"

He got a boat. He glided along the bay, and gave a melancholy glance back at the consul's house. The fair Adela was on the roof, and waved a white handkerchief to him. It struggled in the wind. And that wind was to bear him away. So terminated the romance of a fortnight—which is so often the colouring of a life.

He found the "Viper" on the point of sailing, and Tinsley furious. The commander harangued his crew, and told them that "a set of fellows who would rob a church were capable of anything." Having delivered himself of this apothegm, he "watered the grog" of the offenders, and proceeded below to drink his own more moderately watered. Shortly afterwards, the "Viper" sailed.

"Do you know, sir," said the old boatswain—a bit of a Radical —to Singleton, confidentially, "touching the robbing that there chapel . . . . . it ain't worse than Henry the Eighth did! But times is different, and the rights of the people ain't understood," he added, thoughtfully.

Once more the "Viper" was at sea, and gliding to the southward.

Singleton had the first watch that night, and mused much as it drew near midnight. He was thinking of the tender and playful Greek, and wondering what sort of a life a consul's was. Whether it was a good speculation to grow mulberry-trees and feed silkworms, and to cultivate olives for the home market—these were the youth's various fancies! Heaven only knows what he meditated.

He noticed one of the watch descending the fore-rigging. The man came up to him—

"Here's something for you, sir, if you like to have it. I caught the poor thing asleep on the fore-yard."

It was a pretty little white dove—the bird of Venus.

"I accept the omen," muttered Fontenoy, as he warmed it in his breast.

CHAPTER III.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell,
A spirit from on high,
But, oh, more horrible than that,
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!

THE ANCIENT MARINER.

In a few days, the "Viper" fell in with a steamer, which brought orders for her to proceed to Tripoli. Away she went. That same evening she fell in with something more serious.

Just after sunset, Singleton being in charge of the watch, mounted on the poop-gratings, and looked round. It was a wonderfully serene evening—soft and still as a country churchyard, all over the sea. There was absolutely nothing in sight on the ocean, and the horizon girded the vessel round like a magic circle. Singleton was the only officer on deck. All sail was set, and the yards were braced sharp up, but the sails hung from them indolently, and not a reef-point dangled.

Singleton breathed on his hand, and held it up to feel for an air. There was not a breath to sully a mirror. The water was smooth as ice. A rosy stream of sunset light just lingered on it, and looked like the red lips of a slumbering girl. Singleton sat down on the gratings, and played with his dove. He had taught it to eat out of his hand, and know him thoroughly; in a word, it was as tame and familiar as the pigeon in the apocryphal story about Mahomet.

"Adela, Adela!" said Singleton, raising it up and down gently on his wrist. The dove's mild eyes met his lovingly. "Pretty pet!

'There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet-curl
From the lovely lady's cheek.'

Eh! Adela? Does it read Coleridge?" All which was nonsense, highly contemptible, no doubt, in the eyes of sensible fools.

Here the quartermaster of the watch approached, and touching his hat, said, "I would not trust the calm too much, sir." He was an old sailor of great experience, and Singleton always treated him with that attention due to a man old enough to be his grandfather.

"Eh, Fellowes!" he said, jumping up, and depositing the bird in a safe place. He looked round again, and saw no sign of danger. However, he did not like to neglect the warning; but knowing Tinsley's inveterate hatred to shortening sail, contented himself with seeing clewlines, &c., laid along the deck.

"Look out, sir!"

A terrible gust burst upon them. "Shorten sail!" roared Singleton. Over went the brig. Singleton cut the main-sheet with a tomahawk. The main-sail split like a thunder-cloud. The helm was down. The brig righted—flew head to wind—stood with every rag of sail blown from the bolt-ropes—trembling—but safe? It was a white squall! It rose, struck, and died in one terrible breath.

Tinsley sprang on deck. The first thing he saw was one of the after-guard who had fallen down on his knees to pray. A moment of wild incredulity, and he sprang like a wild beast. "Why, you damnation scoundrel!" and gave the suppliant a tremendous kick, which sent him flying into the scuppers. So much for devotion afloat!

The brig was safe. The hands were turned up to bend new sails, reefs were taken in, and all made snug for the night.

"Well," said Tinsley, "thank God, they can't make *me* pay for the sails this time!" And with this devout thanksgiving, the commander retired to his cabin.

The brig anchored before Tripoli one evening soon after. It was dusk, and the wind was off the land. Welwyn had the first watch. Singleton was sitting in the berth with Simms and Brunt, and they were all three talking of various matters connected with the ship.

"Where shall we go after leaving this, think you?" asked Singleton.

"To Marmorice Bay, I'm afraid," said Brunt. "Hand me a spoon—thank you. You've lost your spirits, Fontenoy."

"Yes; but I've found my heart, which was getting dull."

"You're sententious. What a mercy these fresh lemons are; eh, you fellows?"

"Yes. What does our prophet [as they used jocularly to call Welwyn] say about love?"

"Something vague—but approving. 'Every soul is a celestial Venus to every other soul,'* was his last utterance, I believe. I'm going to buy him a tripod," said Brunt, grinning.

"Do you know anything of Welwyn's history?" asked Singleton, lowering his voice.

"No; nothing to speak of. He served his time in South America. He told me he was poor," said Brunt—"that's all."

Singleton was affected. "How clever he is!" he said, warmly.

"Yes," Brunt answered, sincerely; "he is, and a hard student from his boyhood. He is the truest philosopher I ever met, in his life."

"A glorious fellow!" said little Simms, with enthusiasm.

"Hush! what noise is that?" asked Singleton. There was a trembling of feet overhead, a hum of voices, a voice calling for a lantern, and a pipe for a boat's crew. Simms ran up to see what was the matter.

"What can it be?" said Brunt to Singleton.

"God knows," said Singleton. "Can it be—stop! What a sickly feeling I have at my heart!"

"You look pale; taste this. Pshaw,—it's only a qualm, man."

"Death must be something like that qualm, then. Here's Simms."

"Oh, just fancy," said Simms; "a fellow swam from the shore,—a native,—caught hold of the cable, nearly drowning. They've pulled him on board."

"How extraordinary!"

"Mr. Brunt, you're wanted," cried a seaman at the door. Up jumped Brunt, cool, active, and quick. There was a scuffling noise on the lower deck. Simms and Singleton sat still in the berth, and looked at each other anxiously.

In ten minutes' time Brunt came running in. "Did you ever see a person die, either of you?" he asked.

"No."

Impelled by the fearful curiosity which carries us to the scene of the great mystery, they both followed him. They went inside a screen, and there they saw a dark, swarthy man lying—delirious, and galloping on to death. He was muttering away some words which they could not understand.

* Emerson.

"Send Dato here," said Brunt. Dato was a Maltese, who served as a sailor on board the brig. He came, anxious, and wondering what the doctor wanted him for. When he caught sight of the dying man, all his native superstitions crowded on him. "Oh, sar," he said, crossing himself, "what you want me for?"

"Hush, you fool," said Brunt; "you know Arabic; is the man speaking Arabic?" Death had no terrors for the surgeon; he minded it no more than the stopping of a watch.

The Maltese knelt down, and put his ear near the dying man's mouth, and again made the sign of the cross. They formed a curious group: the Maltese grinned like a negro with emotion; Brunt gazed calmly on; Simms shed tears; Singleton held his breath,—prayer was stirring in the depths of his soul!

"He speak of his wife and little ones, sar," said the Maltese, looking up terrified.

"Poor fellow!" said Brunt, "Hippocrates could not save him now!"

"He speak of destruction,—and ruin,—and starvation,—and revenge, sar," cried Dato, running out the words suddenly, and with big tears on his brown face.

The muttering ceased; the face changed its expression; the head gave a short, sharp vibration; life was gone. Singleton and Simms hurried away.

. . . . . But what were the tidings that reached them soon, —spreading through the ship like a fatal fire, making every face pale, and every heart beat!

Holy of Holies? The "Viper" had the plague!

CHAPTER IV

Nulla fugæ ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
Omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.
CATULLUS.

THIS, then, was the dead man's avenger! This was the revenge which he had taken for the ruin brought upon him by the English Crusade. He had left a curse as a legacy, and death for an executor. The Plague was on board the brig. Death lurked in the charmed air. No man could be sure that the Skeleton was not hovering at his elbow. It was an atmosphere of terror and mystery!

In the morning they saw the ghastly emblem of the dread disease—a yellow flag with a black ball in the centre—flying from the fort. Already two men were seized on board. Nausea,

faintness, delirium—death—were the steps, in regular succession. Some died raving violently, some in a muttering torpor. Of some, the death-bed was attended by beautiful visions. Some floated away to the dark river to the sound of soft music.*

Like a wounded bird, that flies away, endeavouring to escape from the agony which it bears within itself, the "Viper" left Tripoli next day, and carried her agony into the loneliness of the sea. All the night before they had heard from the shore the howl of the jackal. As she moved away in the forenoon they saw two dark specks approaching. The specks increased in size; they were vultures, lured from their distant homes in Lebanon, by the unerring instinct which tells them where there is death. At noon two sharks were seen sailing about four hundred yards off, with their fins just above water. They had seen no sharks before! Yet, there they were, drawn from some secret haunt by the promise of a feast.

Commander Tinsley assembled the officers in his cabin to deliberate, and to give his general instructions in the crisis. Everybody was present. There was a solemnity about the commander's manner that contrasted strangely with his usual language and appearance. But the elements of tragedy are simple enough. Once bring in death, and your other *dramatis personæ* soon suit themselves to the play. When fair Ophelia's body enters, the gravedigger's jesting is forgotten. Tinsley consulted Flibb and Brunt. The surgeon was nervous, uncertain, embarrassed. Brunt was cool and grand—confident and courageous; for Brunt had a theory, and very often a theory is as supporting as a religion. Who does not remember the case of a naval surgeon serving on the coast of Africa, who, convinced that the fever on board was not contagious, held a wineglass to the lips of a wretch in his last agony, received the black vomit in it—drank—and lived! This was never excelled by all the acts of all the martyrs. Honour to a man who believes in a law of God, and with a firm faith goes on never doubting!

The officers were dismissed to their duties. Part of the ship was turned into a kind of hospital. The clothes of every seaman who died were burnt, together with his hammock. Several things were done in the efficacy of which Brunt did not privately believe, but it was necessary to keep up as well as possible the courage of the crew. It was beautiful to see how, when the disease was at its worst, discipline maintained itself. There was philosophy to be learnt by studying that. Even men, whom the spectacle of death, coming apparently capriciously, and leaving

* Aubert, a French physician in Egypt, told Prince Puckler Muskau, "that he considered the death of a plague-patient one of the happiest." (See the Prince's "Egypt," vol. i. p. 13.)

no one safe, impelled to a brutal levity of language and conduct —who laughed at the destroyer—in whom a familiarity with death had bred a terrible contempt of it!—the worst of these never broke through a regulation of the ship. They respected law more than they feared the grave.

The brig was sailing under very easy sail in a light wind, near the coast of Asia Minor. It was a beautiful morning; and no one who looked from a distance at the brig, and saw her white sails tapering away to the sky, her beautiful hull bounded by the brilliant line of copper which joined the water in a golden kiss, would have thought what havoc was going on within! The midshipmen's mess were all sitting inside the berth, with the doors shut, to hear a report of the state of the vessel, which Brunt used to give them. One more morning, and here they all were, still alive! Singleton used to say that every such morning seemed in itself a resurrection!

They were all four sitting in silence. Brunt was looking over the notes which he daily made: perhaps it is not too much to say, that the calamity had lost half its horrors for him—it acquired such an intense and beautifying light from Thought.

"It is odd," muttered Brunt, at last, turning over paper after paper; "scarcely one case with symptoms of recovery! But I tell you what is odd: none of the officers have had it yet. Now, their number being in proportion to that of the whole crew in the ratio of——"

"Hush, doctor!" interrupted little Simms, turning pale and glancing round, as if he thought Death was listening; "don't give us such calculations. I declare there is no hope anywhere." So saying, he pulled out a Bible, which his mother had given him, and opening it in the Psalms, he read aloud, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."*

"Disturb yourself as little as you can, my good boy," said Brunt kindly, moving to close the book gently, which Simms resisted. "Look at me: I am in the thick of it all day," he added. "I move where fly thickest the arrows from the silver bow. If I should get it, by the bye," he added coolly, "one of you fellows send my notes to Dr. Forbes, for the 'Medical Quarterly.' If all get well, I will throw such light on the disorder as shall astonish the profession throughout Europe."

And the doctor rose and walked forward to inspect his patients, cool, courageous, and indomitable, and moving through the atmosphere of sickness like a refreshing and healthy breeze. His poor superior, old Flibb, trifled and bungled about, picking up

* Psalm xxxvi. 7

hints from him, and then, with great pomposity, giving orders for them to be acted upon.

Just after Brunt left, Fontenoy heard a noise on deck; and, going up, found that a breeze had sprung up, and that the commander was ordering sail to be put on the vessel. He soon found that they were bearingup to close with a schooner, which had come out from the land, and was running away to the south-west as hard as she could go. All the canvass possible was put upon the brig, but the schooner was a fast sailer, and held her own very well. Singleton glanced at Tinsley, and saw at once that he had been drinking: his face was inflamed, and his eyes bloodshot.

"Now then, the topgallant studding-sails ready for setting," he shouted. "D—n the fellows; by G—d, the plague has made them lazy!"

As he spoke, he swung his telescope in his hand: it struck against a carronade, and the glass smashed. Tinsley looked at it stupidly for a moment, and flung it out of a port overboard, with an air of bravado. Then he hiccuped, and turned up his bloodshot eyes, to see whether the topgallant studding-sails were ready for setting.

"Mr. Fontenoy, go up to the foretop, and see that studding-sail ready, will you?"

Fontenoy ran up the rigging. As he gained the top, he found two men getting it ready. Meanwhile, Tinsley called out again, "Foretop there, look smart, will you!"

"Look smart yourself, you ———" said one of the men, *sotto voce*.

"Silence, Henderson," said Singleton, quietly.

"I beg your pardon, sir," answered the man, civilly, "but ain't it provoking?"

The sails were set. Presently the brig neared the schooner, which, though an English vessel, might with propriety be called the chase, for Tinsley was pursuing her as if she was an enemy, and the schooner held on as if she was flying from a hostile frigate.

When Singleton came down on deck again, he found that Tinsley had gone below for a few minutes. Lieutenant Bobus and Block the master were talking earnestly together. Singleton could not help hearing them.

"Yes," said Bobus, "the coast's beginning to tell on him. Nothing can stand against what he's doing now."

Block muttered something in reply, and then Bobus answered again, and his concluding words were "death—vacancy!"

"Ho, ho, my old fellow," thought Singleton, "that's your game, is it?" And he chuckled to think of the coolness with which old Bobus could speculate on another man's death, when

in the whole ship not one being's life was worth half an hour's purchase! Seeing Welwyn come up the main hatchway, and knowing that this trait of Bobus's character would interest his thoughtful mind, he went up to tell him of it.

"Fool," said Welwyn, sneering, "and this night his soul may be required of him!"

The solemn words sounded on Singleton's ear like a knell. "And my soul, too," he thought—for on board that cursed vessel, though one might escape the thought of death for a little in employment or in abstraction—back came the dread idea always like the jerk of a captive's chain.

Welwyn and Fontenoy were walking about the deck silently—Fontenoy having now taken charge of the afternoon watch, when the commander came on deck again with a face redder than ever.

"Where's the schooner, Mr. Fontenoy."

"On the lee-bow, sir," Fontenoy answered, and jumped up on the gangway ladder to point her out.

As they looked, the schooner at last hove to. She was one of those slashing schooners that come home with fruit from Smyrna, and are always fast sailers. There is a prize given, I believe, to the one that reaches home earliest, and in good time for the market, which of course stimulates them to "carry on." But Tinsley was a gentleman whose brig carried on in a style scarcely surpassed by the "Flying Dutchman."

They lowered the stern-boat on board the "Viper," and sen some hands into her. Tinsley pulled some dollars out of hi pocket, and said to Singleton, "Go and get some fruit from her it's imperatively necessary to the ship's health!"

Singleton stared with astonishment. "But, sir, we must hoist the plague-flag! We cannot go on board that vessel!"

"By God, we must have some fruit," replied the commander.

Singleton went into the boat, pulled off, and laid on his oars to leeward of the schooner, keeping a good distance.

"What do you want?" asked a gruff fellow in a black hat, looking over the side.

Singleton stood up in the boat. "I am from H.M.'s sloop 'Viper;' we want some fruit—we've got the plague on board," cried Singleton, determined not to injure the poor fellows of the schooner, come what might.

The gruff man disappeared, and returned in a minute with a musket in his hand. "By God, sir, if you come near us, I'll fire at you!" At the same moment some of the schooner's men ran forward to "let draw," with a view to standing on.

"Come," said Singleton, quietly, "I don't mean to hurt you.

fling some fruit in to us, or by Jove, if you don't, our captain will give you some of our *grape!*"

"Cool shavers, curse me," said the gruff man, disappearing again, and returning this time with a batch of melons.

"Look out—catch!" he cried, flinging first three or four round water-melons, then some of the long, yellow *casalbar* species, at them. Some of them fell into the water, and were promptly picked up.

"Now go away, and God save you," cried the old gruff man, with a kind of rude pathos. The schooner then filled and stood on, and—the temporary excitement of this incident over—Singleton felt very melancholy as they drew near the brig again, and saw her black hull lying on the water like a coffin, with the clewed-up mainsail drooping like a white pall. The commander eagerly seized the melons, and selecting one for himself, handed over the rest to Brunt, to be used as he thought proper. The schooner was soon out of sight, and the "Viper" once more alone.

Shortly after sunset that evening, a message came into the midshipmen's berth that the captain wanted Mr. Brunt. The news was over the ship in an instant; it was rumoured that the captain was "seized," and two or three of the men whispered that it was a punishment to him for saying that the plague had made the crew lazy.

Welwyn and Singleton went upon deck soon after, and just as they reached it, Welwyn pinched Singleton's arm, and whispered, "Look there." Looking aft, they saw old Bobus peering down the cabin skylight into Tinsley's cabin with eager curiosity. "Mark the ghoul," said Welwyn, in disgust. Bobus raised his head, walked aft, and stretched out his arms violently, with the air of one who is practising gymnastic exercises. "How well I know what he is thinking!" Welwyn continued. "He is testing his own health, and congratulating himself on it!" As they stood watching the lieutenant, one of the seamen came rolling by quite drunk, and singing. These were the words:—

> Four jolly sailors, so stout and so strong.
> They fisted up the corpse, and they carried it along!

He gave a dull, glazed leer at them, and rolled away down the hatchway, hiccuping out his ditty. They did not interfere with him nor report him. Plague did. That same man died next day, and went to answer for all his offences against Nature's articles of war elsewhere.

Another morning! Once more the little band met in their berth, sound and well. Still the plague was going on. Still Brunt was active and hopeful; and still the awful notes of

phenomena swelled. Whatever that theory might be which sustained the doctor's soul, death seemed the practical part of the affair! Simms read his Bible, and looked forward with timid hope. Welwyn was wrapped up in his serene philosophy; but poor Fontenoy was wretched—disturbed—miserable. *He had no theory!*

Oh! sceptical philosophers, who destroy and cannot build!—oh! fair poets, who dream, and do not teach!—oh, brilliant essayists, who suggest, and cannot satisfy!—behold your pupil here! Pleasant Lalage, whose face beamed dimmer through the past; fair Adela, star of the morning land, ye could bring him no consoling thought now. Better to have been spawned on the banks of the Nile in the olden time, and believed, if it were only in a brute, than to live amidst the wonders of civilization, and have no faith!

CHAPTER V.

Abstineas, Mors atra, precor: non hic mihi mater,
Quæ legat in mœstos ossa perusta sinus;
Non soror, Assyrios cineri quæ dedat odores,
Et fleat effusis ante sepulcra comis.
TIBULLUS, Lib. i. Eleg. 3.

Dark death, abstain; I have no mother here,
To clasp my ashes to her saddened breast;—
No sister to pour perfume on my bier,
And weep, dishevelled, at my place of rest.

THE "Viper's" ship's company were at breakfast on the lower deck. Its size did not admit of tables, so they sat on the deck itself, each with his basin of cocoa and broken biscuit between his legs. The plague had been recently diminishing, and in exact proportion to that diminution, the commander's consumption of liquids increased. The midshipmen's mess grew more cheerful, and First Lieutenant Bobus left off saying his prayers. Bobus did not consider that it was perhaps premature just yet.

Fontenoy was sitting outside the berth-door on a camp-stool, reading, when an incident happened, which being characteristic, shall be recorded.

There was among the "Viper's" marines one stolid unfortunate fellow—enlisted in the depths of Gloucestershire—who was always in the bad graces of the sergeant, and continually being punished by the first lieutenant. He was wonderfully dull; and yet though one would have expected that Bobus would have sympathized with him, that officer did nothing of the sort. He punished him for being dull; and having thus made him duller,

punished him again for getting worse. He had accordingly become by this time what is called "incorrigible;" and we know from all experience — schoolboy and other—that incorrigible characters are always the most severely "corrected" by the authorities.

This morning poor Tomkins had been suffering some sort of punishment or other, and in the middle of breakfast-time (while Fontenoy was sitting on the camp-stool, as above mentioned), he came down the main-ladder. He joined his mess, and then with a half-crying voice, he called out publicly, "I can't stand being put-on like this. I'll jump overboard."

He sprang to his legs suddenly, and rushed to the fore-ladder.

"Leave me your traps, John," called out one of the marines, amidst a roar of laughter. Tomkins rushed up the ladder, and in another instant a heavy splash resounded through the whole ship. Without waiting for a summons, the whole crew started up and sprang on deck after him. The brig was running free, with studding-sails set on both sides; the helm was put hard-a-starboard; "snap, snap," went the studding-sail booms, the life-buoy was let go; a boat was got out, and Tomkins was picked up and brought on board, wet through, and miserably sheepish-looking. Commander Tinsley received him at the gangway. Tomkins was brought before him, dripping like a huge bunch of seaweed.

"Well, I'm d—d," said Tinsley; "it's like your impudence to try and commit suicide on board my ship! It's—it's extremely wicked—to rush into the presence of your Creator—without leave from the commanding officer."

"I'm so put-on," muttered Tomkins, with a look of dogged misery.

"Stop his grog," said Tinsley to the sergeant, who was in attendance. "By G—, nobody on board here shall go to the devil without my permission."

Thereupon Tomkins was dismissed below, to tell his sorrows "to the marines," as before.

This incident dramatically relieved the tragic existence of the brig; but the drama went on, in a short time, as tragically as ever; obedient to laws which it is impossible to trace, the pestilence suddenly swelled again into an unexpected increase. What a pity that the most serious scenes in life must be dashed by what is ludicrous and what is mean—that, as a faithful painter, I must state that Tinsley diminished his drinking, and Bobus resumed his prayers!

A few days afterwards, the brig being still at sea, a message came from Bobus to the assistant-surgeon, saying that he wanted

to speak to him. "What's in the wind now?" muttered Brunt, rising from the table, where he was occupied with his notes. Welwyn and Fontenoy were sitting silent, and looking at each other; Simms was asleep on the lockers; Brunt bundled his notes into a desk and ran on deck.

Fontenoy broke the silence: somehow or other silence seemed favourable to the disease.

"Welwyn, you look calm. How is your pulse? Let us compare notes."

Ten times a day they went through the ceremony. Welwyn, without speaking, now laid his fingers on his wrist. "Stop," cried Fontenoy; they announced the numbers.

"Mine is slower than usual," Fontenoy said, languidly. "I am weary; the sight of the sun makes me sick here. What a miserable existence—this lovely climate, and this dread disease! It is like a beauty with a sick breath. You don't speak, Welwyn," he cried, peevishly. "Speak."

Welwyn continued silent, with his large, clear blue eyes fixed.

"Welwyn," resumed Fontenoy, "say something."

His friend looked up with his serene, smiling face, calm as usual, "What is there to say? Fear nothing, man; death itself is only an idea, and as natural as light; be calm, and care for nothing."

"Pshaw!" cried Fontenoy, striking the table. "Be human; don't carry about a bag of metaphysical wind, or it will fail you in your need."

"I am calm," said Welwyn.

"And I am—loved!" said Fontenoy, relapsing into melancholy, and throwing himself back. "How can I be anything but miserable here?"

They were silent again. At that moment Simms muttered something in his sleep, and turned round restlessly; his flaxen curls hung across his brow, white as the wool of the parcæ.

"He would be happy if he could sleep for ever," said Fontenoy, sighing. Here there was a noise on deck, a trampling of feet, and a humming of talk. The two young men looked at each other with that unquiet inquisitiveness of expression common to the sharers of a situation of peril. The white windsail, drooping down the main-hatchway near the berth-door, fluttered languidly. A whiff of wind, smelling like dead flowers, hovered in the air. Again, young Simms turned restlessly, but he continued to sleep on.

"What's that noise, I wonder?" said Fontenoy.

Welwyn was going to make some observation, when their messmate Brunt came running down the main-ladder to his dispensary—a wretched little cabin, like a large gallipot,—dotted

with white bottles and jars, containing leeches too ill to bite,—seized something, and hurried away again. Fontenoy and Welwyn followed him and gained the deck. The brig was moving lazily before the wind. The sea was white with light, and on the horizon the distant mountains of Cyprus—which island was just faintly visible—rose from the water, like a rich blue vapour.

Lieutenant Bobus was walking backwards and forwards on the starboard side of the deck. His manner, his hauteur, the offensiveness of his look of superiority, all showed that something had happened. He stopped every now and then, and—as they had once seen him do before—peered anxiously down the cabin skylight. Welwyn and Fontenoy stopped at the gangway-ladder and watched him.

"What's in the wind?" whispered Fontenoy.

"Death," said Welwyn, laconically.

"How do you mean?"

"Don't you see?" said Welwyn, with his grave Gibbonian sneer, "Tinsley must be ill of the plague. Bobus wants to command the brig—the Falstaff of Tragedy—the *parvenu* of pestilence!"

They were silent. A boy who was a servant of the commander's came silently up the companion-ladder, and moved away from the skylight of the cabin a flag that had been cast over it. Fresh air and light went down to the dying man's abode. Tinsley was in the last stage of the disease. His delirium was peopled with the base and brutal images that an ill-spent life had stamped upon his brain, and his bad and foolish thoughts and deeds came back like ghosts to him. The ship was agitated at the news. Death seemed more terrible to the crew now that it was seizing their commander!

While Fontenoy and his messmate stood silently by the gangway, Brunt came up the companion-ladder. He was viewed by the ship's company as a superior being. The grave and acute materialist seemed a symbol of human power in contrast with the powers of nature. He had saved several of the attacked; his courage had animated all. His conduct, in a word, was an exact illustration of that attributed to Cuvier, in the witty anecdote which represents him defying the devil to devour him, on the ground that he was not of a carnivorous *genus*, as proved by his horns and hoofs!

Brunt went up to the first lieutenant, now, and touching his cap, made a report. Fontenoy watched Bobus. His figure drew up to its full length.

"No hope?" said Bobus, with his most commanding look.

"It's all hope with him," whispered Fontenoy to Welwyn, in a low voice.

Brunt fixed his eye—it was a cold blue eye of the colour of steel—on Bobus. "He is dying, Mr. Bobus. Clot Bey could not save him now!"

As Brunt mentioned the name of that great physician of the East, he too drew himself up a little, but with very different feelings. Bobus was silent. Suddenly he said, "These sails are very worn. We must shift sails."

He was stepping forward to give an order, when Brunt interrupted him. "The noise would disturb my patient."

Bobus hesitated. "The sails ought to be shifted."

"I object to the patient's being disturbed," said Brunt, decidedly.

"You don't command the brig, sir!" cried Bobus, angrily.

"No, sir—the Plague does just now," replied the assistant-surgeon with great composure, and helping himself to snuff. "I beg to represent to you as a medical officer of this ship, that what you propose to do is an act of impropriety. As a gentleman——"

"Stop, sir!" roared the first lieutenant.

But as he was about to break out in wrath, a dull, faint moan was distinctly audible through the open skylight. At that sound he paused. Brunt ran down the companion-ladder again. There was a pause. Curiously enough—and the superstitious nature of the sailors made the fact long remembered by them—at that instant, one of the slight shocks of earthquake, common in the Mediterranean, took place. The brig—which was stationary in a calm, with all her white sails spread—shook like a water-lily.

The commander was dead!

The *novissima verba* of all men, remarkable either for good or ill, are worth recording. Tinsley's latest words, before delirium drowned his reason—his last utterance in this miraculous universe—expressed his regret that the admiral would get a death-vacancy! *Sic transit gloria* IMmundi,—so passeth the glory of the impure!

The sea received his ashes. With equal greediness of swallow, Lieutenant Bobus assumed his command. Now comes another act in this strange farce-tragedy.

Bobus turned the hands up, assembled officers and men on the quarter-deck, and delivered an harangue. He ought to have explained why he was so anxious to have shifted sails in the hour of his late commander's agony. Was it that he wished to disturb those heavy-laden moments? I have heard of an officer who did this—who exerted himself to accomplish this: such men are the best arguments for future rewards and punishments, and ought to be publicly preached upon (to use a most humorous suggestion of Mr. Thackeray's) as such!

"I will turn over a new leaf in this ship," said Bobus. "The plague has made you lazy. The service must be attended to—and discipline carried out. My remarks apply equally to the officers"—and here he turned round to Welwyn and Fontenoy. The gaze of the assembled seamen followed his eye. Fontenoy blushed with rage and contempt. He was of the sweetest good-nature, but he was nervous and irritable. We are the slaves of our temperaments—and our nerves work us, as strings do puppets. His lips glowed with a white heat of anger. He would have exploded in invective, but Welwyn—always calm—pressed his arm violently.

"Don't look at me, sir," cried the first lieutenant, who saw Fontenoy's glance.

"There is no temptation to do it," said Singleton, with a very decided sneer.

"Mr. Fontenoy—go below under arrest!" said Bobus. The ship's company stared. Singleton touched his cap—bowed—and descended accordingly.

"Contempt of the commanding officer," said Bobus, looking round, "will be punished in every case!"

If Bobus had carried out *that* resolution, most people on board must have been severely corrected!

Fontenoy descended to the berth. He was sick and miserable. He tried to read but could not. He was surprised to see that Simms was still asleep there, and had not gone on deck when the hands were turned up. So he thought it right to waken him. He shook him gently. Simms woke up suddenly, and then recovering himself, shook the sleep from him as a bird shakes water from its wings. His face seemed somewhat changed; it had a pinched look, and was as pale as an unripe peach.

"Where have we been?" he asked, abruptly.

"Been?" asked Singleton, in surprise.

"I thought we had been somewhere together," said Simms. "I must have been dreaming."

Singleton smiled awkwardly. He was a little superstitious. And to be superstitious in that accursed ship was to be accursed.

Simms moved away the long, white hair from his bony temples. He picked up the silk neck-handkerchief which had fallen off his neck while he was lying down, and flung it carelessly round. It got twisted in some way behind. He asked Singleton to tie it for him.

Singleton jumped up to do it, stepped behind his friend, and disengaged the flowing black silk. As he did so, he saw what made sickness creep from his heart to his cheek. On the white

neck were *two black spots*, like drops of stale gore—the boils that mark the pestilence. What blight is to the flower, or poison to a well, were these spots to the dweller among the plague-stricken.

Singleton swallowed his first emotions as one does a nauseous drug, and stood silent and still. He mechanically went on tying the handkerchief, but his fingers trembled.

"What's the matter, Fon?" asked Simms.

His careless question—the soft boyish tones in which he spoke, and which were asociated in Singleton's mind with happy days and gay hopes—made him completely lose his self-possession. He burst into tears, and his eyes were pained with their hot stream. He threw himself on the cushioned lockers, and wept aloud.

"Good God, Fontenoy!" cried Simms, in astonishment.

Brunt entered the berth as he did so. But, though the aspect of Fontenoy was the most extraordinary, and apparently the most alarming of the two, Brunt's eyes rested on Simm's face. Fontenoy sat up, and contrived to convey by his eyes to the assistant-surgeon something of what he dreaded.

"You're looking palish, my boy," said Brunt, carelessly, to Simms. "What have you been eating? Here, let me tie that handkerchief of yours for you."

Simms—and it is strange how we are indifferent to imminent danger which frightened us at a distance (as, for example, we see people who know that five or six of their family have died of consumption, obstinately indifferent to the fact of their spitting blood, and so forth)—Simms smiled, and moved towards Brunt. Brunt quietly tied the handkerchief.

"Poor Fon has been crying about something," said Simms, kindly, and smiling. They were the last words Singleton ever heard him say. The pestilence had been working in his blood, and soon giddiness and nausea came on, and his soul began to choke in the ghastly vapours of death.

The disease had now reached its crisis, and the period of the year had come when, according to every calculation, it *must* cease. Brunt was positive it could not last. He swore he would inoculate himself with it, and try the experiment.

The evening of the day after Simms was taken ill, another piece of news thrilled the vessel. Fontenoy, who still remained under arrest, was sent for on deck. He went up, and found Welwyn in charge of the watch.

"You are released from arrest, Fontenoy," he said.

"How so?"

"Bobus is dead!" was the reply. It was true; Welwyn had thus become commander of the vessel for the time.

The greatness of the crisis made the two young men silent. the brig had now been cruising for some time in the expectation of falling in with the squadron, and receiving orders from the admiral. To-night she was not far from Rhodes, and they could see the lights twinkling in the distance, in the city. It was a warm summer evening, redolent of the South—an evening when the air tastes like a celestial wine, and the clouds seem violet and crimson—an evening for love and wonder, luxury and wit. The moon seemed to glow with life, and the whole heavens shone with light, as the desert with sand—a Sahara of stars!

And little Simms was dying on this evening—to mingle with the elements in their happiest hour. Totally insensible to the coming change, he was steeped in stupor, so that the effect to Fontenoy, who went to see him, was (as he described it to Welwyn) that of seeing a person murdered! But happy they who die insensible—and whose first emotion is the presence of God!

"You have seen him?" said Welwyn, lowering his voice.

"Yes," answered Singleton, shortly.

"This is an evening for philosophy," said Welwyn, gazing round.

"But scarcely while our friend is dying, in the blossom of life, below," said Singleton, with reproach looking through his tears.

"You mistake me," said Welwyn, gently. "I mean no neglect, God knows. But love and sorrow are part of my philosophy. My regret is part of it."

Welwyn looked so touched, that Singleton regretted his words. He pressed his hand, and said, "Oh, there are many reasons why I should be the last to misrepresent or hurt you."

Welwyn was utterly calm again, and made no reply. The conversation then turned to the prospects of the vessel; and soon after, Brunt brought up the news that Simms had died. They had a long lock of his light hair cut off, which Fontenoy sent to his mother at Plymouth. She used to show it to her relations and friends, poor old lady, and cry over it. She bought a portrait of the "'Viper' as she was leaving Plymouth," painted in the days when her son first joined the brig, and when his appointment as clerk's assistant was thought a wonderful piece of good fortune. She often told the story of the great plague on board her Majesty's brig "Viper," and would remark that "the commander himself had not been spared;" and went on—saying it was "sinful to repine," and—repining, as women do.

Shortly after Simms was buried (they buried him at sea, and

Fontenoy ran aloft to the main-top, and cried there during the ceremony) the brig fell in with the squadron. They were sprawling across the ocean like a shoal of whales. The "Viper" hoisted her yellow plague-flag—symbol of a supremacy not to be attacked. It created an enormous sensation among the squadron. An interchange of signals at great length took place between the "Viper" and the admiral's ship. The news spread from one vessel to another, and was received with a volley of "Good Geds!" "Doosed odds!" "Shockings!" &c. &c., according to the tastes of the various messes.

The "Viper" was ordered to proceed to Malta, to take up her station, and go through her quarantine, at the Plague Hospital in Quarantine Harbour. Welwyn was made acting lieutenant in command. The easterly wind thundered in the rear of the brig; the plague abated.

In the happy season of the almond and the orange—when the blood-orange gives its heart's blood to moisten the sweet lips of the South—the "Viper" arrived at Malta.

CHAPTER VI.

Patria ô mea creatrix, patria ô mea genetrix,
* * * * *
Ubinam aut quibus locis te positam, patria rear?

CATULLUS.

Where dost thou lie, thou loved land, my country, oh, my country, where?

THEODORE MARTIN'S TRANS.

THE Quarantine Harbour of Malta is a long creek, which runs parallel with the Grand Harbour, and to the northward and westward of it. The Plague Hospital is a respectable and commodious building on the right-hand side, in the interior. A small churchyard lies behind; a piece of ground some hundred yards in length, and bounded at each end by high walls, stretches in front down to the water's edge. The centre of this ground is occupied by a mass of damp sea-weed or sea-rushes, tenanted by colonies of large rats. To hunt these rats by moonlight was an exciting amusement for the "Viper's" crew, who enjoyed it as much as if they had been country gentlemen. The "Viper" anchored opposite the hospital. The ship was cleared out, the tanks brought on shore, the hold whitewashed, and every part fumigated. The high and airy rooms of the house lodged the seamen healthily; the plague ceased, and nothing remained but to serve through the long quarantine with tolerable patience. Welwyn, in his capacity of commander, had a room

to himself. Brunt and Fontenoy messed together in a large apartment on the ground-floor, where they placed a wooden table on some casks. There was little or no duty to do; and the day was spent in reading, writing, firing with pistols, and smoking cigars. Fontenoy used to saunter out at noon, lie on the grass reading poetry, and watch the white gulls skimming and dipping in the water of the harbour. One day some letters from England were communicated to them by a quarantine officer in his green boat and yellow uniform, with all the caution with which bread is handed to a bear in his cage.

The letters being distributed, Singleton retired into a corner to read one which had arrived for him. It was from his father; but, independent of the news it contained, it was so admirable a specimen of sound sense and paternal advice, that, for the benefit of all classes of readers, I think it right to insert it in these memoirs.

"HEATHERBY, 8th Aug. 184—.

"DEAR SINGLETON,—

"I have received your last letter, and am glad to find that you are succeeding so well in your profession. To guard our country is an honourable—the most honourable of offices. Remember your ancestor who fought at Acre, and your grand uncle who distinguished himself at Minden. Remember, also, my dear boy, your second cousin in the Admiralty; and that, if you behave properly, you will certainly be promoted as soon as you pass for your lieutenancy. We were all glad to hear of your gallant conduct on the Syrian coast: there was a most handsome allusion to it in one of the Huskdale papers, and I sent the editor a haunch of venison. It is our duty to encourage literature, and I shall make the servants subscribe to the man's journal.

[Here Singleton gave a hearty laugh. Brunt, who was reading a letter from a creditor, looked up ruefully.]

"You were slightfully wounded, too, it appears. Never mind these casualties, which are common to all wars. Think what the pride of the family would be, to see you stumping about, a gallant officer with a wooden leg!

"By the bye, you have drawn one or two extra bills on the agents. I hope you are not becoming extravagant. Money is the root of all evil: have as little to do with it as you can. A glass of wine a day is two dozen and a half bottles a year! One life lost at sixpenny pool a night makes a lake in a year! I wish I had never got into debt in my youth. If I had not hunted, and played, and laid in bed late, at Oxford, I must infallibly have taken a First.

"What you say about your studies—the Ideal—Progression

by Antagonism—the Doctrine of the Mythus—Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection'—Dr. Arnold on Church Reform, &c., I consider mystical stuff. Who *is* Emerson? Is he any relation to Wilson Croker? Have you a good copy of Dibdin's songs?

"With regard to news, I know nothing very interesting. Your aunt Marian has a bad cold, and your cousin Eleanor is suffering from the influenza. One of the Singletons has married a poor artist—a regular love-match—at Cheltenham. She wrote me an affecting letter about it: I sent her my forgiveness.

"Frederick Lepel has turned out a wonderful fellow, full of sound practical sense. He will get into Parliament before long. He has a project which I shall perhaps join. It will involve some arrangements about my estate. But as you don't understand these business matters, I shall say no more about them. Write soon.

"Your affectionate Father,
"JOHN SINGLETON FONTENOY."

"Why, what's the matter?" called out Brunt, seeing Singleton rise and colour deeply as the letter dropped from his hands.

"Nothing," said Singleton, moving towards the door.

"Bad news? Have some pale ale."

But Singleton had passed out of the door. It was a warm autumn afternoon, and he went and threw himself on the long grass near the house, whose white walls were glowing in the sun. As he did so, a green-and-gold lizard blazing like a flame darted into a hole in the stone. Singleton read the letter again, crushed it in his hand, and began tearing up the grass, and flinging it at the water.

He was in a mood of angry musing when he heard steps, and Welwyn approached. Welwyn had a pair of pistols in his hand, and was going to practise a little. With him this kind of amusement was very rare, and Singleton felt surprised, and looked so.

"What, are you going to shoot?" he said.

"Yes, I've just had a letter that has disturbed me. I want a material distraction to save me from thought." As he spoke, he went and fixed a circular piece of lead to the wall with a nail, and stepped back to twelve yards.

"I have had just such a letter, too," said Singleton.

"From your father?" asked Welwyn, adjusting himself to fire.

"Yes; what was yours?"

Welwyn fired at the moment Singleton spoke. Under cover of the fire, he suppressed his answer to the question.

"That's a good shot, isn't it? See what a white speck it has made close to the mark!"

Singleton bit his lips.

"You shoot! Take the other pistol while I load this."

"I'm not so good at this practice as you," said Singleton, meaningly. He raised the pistol hastily and fired wide. Welwyn looked at him curiously, and then said, "By the bye, will you come and dine with me to-day, upstairs?"

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"We will have some conversation. Do you care about firing any more?"

There was something in Welwyn's tone which made Singleton look at him to see whether he meant anything besides the thing expressed. Welwyn turned his head away and looked out on the harbour. Involuntarily Singleton's gaze followed; he saw a boat glide out from the opposite side and push towards the shore, obviously intending to land outside the wall. In the wall there was a door through which communications were held between the people in quarantine and the world without. As the boat neared, Singleton saw some female figures in it. He felt a slight smile playing on his lips at the thought of the Transcendental Philosopher's having such visitors; for, from Welwyn's anxious look, it was evident that visitors they were. The pistol shots, had they been signals?

"I don't care about firing any more," said Singleton. "You're a very good shot, Welwyn! *Au revoir!*"

Singleton turned towards the house, and Welwyn moved towards the wall.

"Recovered, eh?" asked Brunt, as Singleton strolled in, and found the medico preparing his work on the Plague, and smoking a cigar.

"Yes," answered Singleton, carelessly. "We recover easily when we are young. Wound the young tree, and it grows again; cut the old one, and it's only fit for firewood."

"Sententious and sentimental."

"Where's our young commander, the youth who exhausts the 'Viper,' and then pants for new vessels to command, like an Alexander?"

"Don't know," answered Brunt.

"Would you like to see him? Alexander seeks his Thais! 'Every soul is a celestial Venus to every other soul.' He's illustrating his philosophy."

He pulled Brunt to one side of the large window, and they saw in the distance Welwyn carrying on a conversation at the door above mentioned. A female form was faintly visible.

"Boy," cried Singleton to the mess-servant, "bring me a spy-

glass. By Jove, I'll inspect her, as an astronomer does Venus! What a pretty girl!

'Serene, with argent-lidded eyes,'

as Tennyson hath it." Here he laid down the glass. "Whew!"

"What's the matter?" said Brunt.

"Why—it's odd—it seems like a face I know!"

"Indeed," said Brunt, with a quiet sneer. "You've been in Malta before, I suppose?"

Singleton sat meditating a little, till he found Welwyn's hand on his shoulder.

"Are you ready for dinner?"

He looked up and blushed, as he thought of what he had been doing just before.

"Yes: I am."

They went upstairs together to Welwyn's rooms. The dinner passed off almost in absolute silence, and Singleton, looking up once or twice, saw his friend turn away his gaze, and look out at the window. It is difficult to preserve our calmness when the heart is full, as it is difficult to carry, without spilling a full cup.

At last, dinner was over. Welwyn proposed that they should draw to the window.

"I never drink wine—or very seldom—as you know," he said, "but here's some claret. Light a pipe. Here is some Latakia—that rose of weeds—and let us spend our few remaining hours in friendly talk."

"Few remaining hours!" said Fontenoy, surprised.

"Yes, *mi frater*,—we get *pratique* to-morrow. I take the brig home as acting lieutenant in command, to pay her off. You are to be discharged to the ordinary-ship in Dockyard Creek, to wait for the 'Patagonian.'"

"By Jove!"

"Yes. And I—I return to my twopenny Lar, and my wooden Penates in England!"

Fontenoy remained silent, and poured out a glass of wine. It was of a rare vintage, and it glowed through his veins like the stolen fire through Prometheus' man of clay. The sunset light flowing in at the window gave new lustre to the lustre of the wine, and fresh ripeness to the ripeness of the fruit. The water of the harbour below throbbed with the pulses of the tide, and trembled and thrilled with the kisses of the sun.

"So, we are going to separate," said Singleton, scarcely knowing what to say. He was anxiously thinking how he could best invite Welwyn to that perfect confidence which he was eager to interchange.

"Even so. The chief good of friendship is not the friend you feel it for, but the Possible of Love in which it induces you to believe." And here Welwyn puffed out a volume of smoke, and looked transcendental.

"Your philosophy is a little stern," said Fontenoy. "I love persons, and not ideas. The early Christians, who were martyrs, died for love of Jesus, and not for love of his whole plan of doctrine. As I once said to you before—be human."

"Friends," said Welwyn, "are like bottles picked up at sea, which tell you of ships far off with cargoes and passengers. They are divine symbols."

"Not a bad illustration; but come, Welwyn, tell me your plan of life. For my part, I live, morally, from hand to mouth—one set of ideas to-day, another to-morrow. Do you know, when we were in the Levant—I don't wish to speak irreverently—but I used to change my religion every morning watch! When in the morning I saw old Mount Athos close to us, with his summit white with wet mist, I thought of the solitude of his monasteries, and sighed for their peace! When, sailing eastward, I heard the waves lashing the shores of Troy, I was a hero-worshipper. I fall into a vague attachment for every girl I see, and look for a Damon in every man I meet. Every fresh book that I come across sways me from my old bearings. But you—you seem to enjoy the repose of an epicurean god! Nothing appears to move you. You seem to regale yourself with the vague philosophy you draw from poetry and pleasure—as tranquilly as you inhale smoke through that amber mouthpiece."

Singleton leaned back exhausted, and refreshed himself with wine.

"Well," said his friend, "your condition is natural. It is, at all events, better than that miserable stagnation of soul which characterises so many people now-a-days, when mankind seem to have lost their individuality, and can only be counted in lumps, like hay or cotton. The first thing necessary to a man is, self-reliance; the second, self-reliance; the third, self-reliance. Your restlessness is healthy: it is like the movements of a child, who, while tumbling everything about near him, is learning from them the laws of the senses. Accept your emotions. Love what comes spontaneously. As Emerson says—'Plant yourself on your instincts.' In one word, my dear Fontenoy, *make your impulses your principles, and be what the world calls irregular, on system.* This will forward your education; but always remember, further, what the same teacher has said, that 'nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.'"

He paused, and they both gazed out upon the waters once

more. The sunlight was dying away, and it seemed as though the soul were departing from the wind. The waters lay so still, that the brig seemed to grow in them like a tree from smooth sward. Shadow after shadow glided over the hushed wave like spies—glided and stole away, and died.

"Who was it that said he had often fancied he could hear the darkness coming?" asked Singleton.

"An American poet—Edgar A. Poe*—a man of a fine but sombre genius; a genius,—like the eyes of your Adela Mavrosceni, at Enupnion—at once dark and luminous."

"Ah, poor Adela!" said Fontenoy. "I had forgotten I was in love with her."

"For shame, Fontenoy!" said Welwyn, sharply.

Fontenoy was abashed. "Open the window," he said.

The fresh twilight cooled his blood, which beat in his temples like the fingers of a fairy. They went out on the balcony in front, and bathed in the odorous air. Lights began to gleam here and there in the town across the harbour, as if fireflies were gradually settling on the walls.

"'Tis our last evening together, Welwyn," said Singleton.

As he spoke, bell after bell began to toll in that island of many churches. The sweet sounds shook the air, like the firing of silver cannon, or the shivering, tinkling bells of innumerable sheep.

It was the hour of vespers. The sound awoke the nightingales, and they began to offer *their* prayer, in song: the song shook the orange-trees, and they offered *their* prayer, in perfume. Perhaps these were not less holy than the formal invocations of the city. The divinest of all prayer—come whence it may—is the prayer which is *unconscious*.

Darkness now began to drop like dew over everything. The brig seemed sailing out of sight in it. The air grew chill; they drew down the window, and lights were brought. The lamplight painted itself on the dark background of the window-panes, like gold.

"Welwyn," said Singleton, rising and beginning to pace the room—('tis a custom that adheres to nautical men for life)—"to-morrow, we separate; to-night, I would invite your confidence. I am not altogether the reckless being that this kind of career would make of me. I have long wished——"

"My dear Singleton," interrupted Welwyn, "I guess what you would say. I will tell you a story; the vesper-bells have reminded me of it."

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* Since the above was written I have published an edition of Poe's Poems. [1863.]

He blew from his little volcano of a meerschaum-bowl a cloud of Vesuvian smoke and began.

"Many years ago there was a family settled in this island, who came here from Italy, having been originally Norman. They were poor and proud—proud of their birth, as only those can be who have known what it is to lose their proper position from loss of fortune. There was one daughter, and she was destined to be made a nun. It was not that the family had ever been very zealous devotees; but the father knew his daughter could not expect now to make a becoming match. So he resolved to marry her—as the phrase is—to Heaven; at all events, as he thought, a suitable bridegroom for one of the A—— family!

"The daughter was young and pretty. And a young and pretty nun—what is she but a flower worked in black crape?—a silver crest on a funeral pall?

"Well; she was entered in the convent as a novice. The nuns were mostly old women; garrulous, pale, wrinkled and extremely fond of *bonbons*. Where she slept there was a hideous crucifix,—the size of life, or rather of death,—at her bedside; without any pretensions to merit, as a work of art, this image had a certain hideousness of fidelity which made it expressive: it seemed terribly alive. It was Jesus,—not the sweet mild figure that we see on the canvass of Francia,—but Jesus cruelly murdered, and as he presented himself to the ferocious rabble that shouted at his crucifixion! This image was not there when she composed herself to sleep the first night; it was only on waking restlessly, before daylight, that by the rays of the moon she saw it for the first time! But what had been intended to terrify, only disgusted this girl, who had a fine imagination: she took an invincible dislike to this establishment. Fancy living with these black old nuns; with their chatter, their bigotry, and ignorance, and superstition; their bad teeth, and their eternal *bonbons*. What a life for a girl, intended by nature to gather strawberries and nurse children! It is a most disgusting system, this, of plucking pretty flowers and pounding them into medicinal drugs!"

"Hear, hear," cried Singleton. Welwyn looked grave, and resumed.

"Time passed on, and nearer and nearer grew the day when the novice was to take the vows; it seems a bad compliment to offer Heaven a broken heart; but in the present wreck of creeds it seems that it is quite common! Meanwhile, the poor girl fell in love. It was with a young Englishman——"

Singleton stopped in his walk, and laying his hand on the lamp, looked with an earnest and troubled glance at the narrator.

"*Eh bien?*" said Welwyn, with a restless kind of smile; "take some wine."

"Go on," said Fontenoy, impatiently.

"She met him, I believe, first in church. He had gone to St. ——'s, as Englishmen do, to stand up, while the people are kneeling in crowds; to gaze at the ceremonies as a show; to come away, thanking Providence that they are 'reformed;' and to go off and play billiards: but their glances met; she loved,—he fancied; he found out who and what she was. Some time afterwards there was a grand procession, in which the girl——"

"What was her Christian name?" asked Fontenoy.

"I forget. The girl, I say, was to represent an angel. Ah, she could do it well! The procession moved on; the Englishman stood by; he slipped into her hand a note; she thrust it into her beating bosom.——But I must be short. The communication went on: she eloped with him, and they were married. But, I believe,—that is, I fear,—she had taken her vows before, and that she broke them; and woe and sorrow came upon her family, and shame mixed like poison with their food and cup." Welwyn's voice faltered, and his face received a transient red.

"She went to England with her husband. I believe she was disappointed in him, to whom she had given everything; he had little to give in return; and remorse took possession of her mind, and her imagination took a sombre hue, and—well—you know the end of all these histories: peace to her early grave!—But, Fontenoy, be calm, for God's sake!" Welwyn started up, and took hold of his friend's hands. "Pshaw, man—tears!"

Fontenoy sat down in a chair, and threw himself back.

"Welwyn," he said, solemnly; "you know that it was my mother of whom you speak!"

"And I, too, have her blood," said Welwyn, pressing together firmly his white lips, and speaking in a low voice.

Singleton shook his hand, and his eyes floated in tears. Just then they heard a noise, and both jumped up, and ran to the window.

"What is that?"

"Hush! The plash of oars," said Welwyn. Once more the fresh night air rushed into the room; the lamp flickered restlessly in its globe, as though the flames were struggling to fly; some shreds of torn paper on the table flew upwards, and dropped down in the room, like a shower of blossoms.

They looked out on the water; the night was dark, but the sharp phosphoric gleam, the lightning of the sea, which broke, showed the motion of oars. "Who's there?" shouted the sentry at the door below.

"All right, sentry," cried Welwyn, from the window. "Wait

here, Fontenoy, while I run down." Welwyn disappeared. Singleton heard a noise of voices below. Here, a sudden impulse prompted him to bury his face in his hands, and reflect on the history which he had just heard; the strange relation stirred his imagination, while it touched his heart,—it opened a romance before him. He thought with intensity of his past life; he brought his mother's image before his eyes; he weaned himself from surrounding objects, and became lost in meditation. The door opened—heavens!—was that her ghost? There entered into the room a young girl, who at once recalled to his eyes the portrait he beheld with emotion in Heatherby so long before.

Her eyes were of the same deep blue—those rich violet eyes in which the hue is beauty, and the light is thought; her hair dark and glossy; her features pale, with a tinge of melancholy alternating with tints of soft rose-colour. Her mouth was always speaking in emotion, even when she was silent. Its soft lines seemed to think, and Fontenoy fancied that they expressed pain. But how entrancing was the charm of the whole face! How beautiful the motions of her slight and graceful figure!

Fontenoy rose up, dazzled and disturbed—entranced in a sweet terror at the supernatural beauty. As she met his eyes, a slight emotion passed over her face. Welwyn entered.

"My sister, Mr. Fontenoy." Then, anxious to relieve the agitation of the scene, he began moving about the room, busying himself in arranging small trifles, shutting down the window, and so on.

"As we get *pratique* to-morrow," he said, smiling, "and as I shall sail soon, I thought I would ask Ivy to dwell in my palace here, to-night. I have prepared a state apartment for her. We meet so seldom, eh, Ivy?"

Ivy smiled, but sadly. Singleton gazed upon her face, and wondered what the sorrow was that tinged it. But he was so much agitated by the events of the night, that he was incapable of uttering even the merest commonplace. For the life of him, he could never acquire that art, so many people have, of uttering pettinesses when heart and soul require something elevating and touching.

Welwyn seemed to make an effort to start a subject of conversation, but there was an obvious constraint on the part of all—a constraint that appeared as if it could melt only into deep and agitating emotion. So Fontenoy judged it best to retire for the night, and did so, soon after.

Next day, the "Viper's" crew went on board the brig. She spread her sails to the wind, and passed round into the Grand Harbour.

It turned out as Welwyn had said. The brig was ordered to England to be paid off. Fontenoy was discharged to the "Kabob," an ordinary-ship lying in Dockyard Creek, to wait for the "Patagonian." That afternoon, he had his chest taken on board. The morning afterwards, he came on deck, early. *The "Viper" had sailed.*

"Gone!" exclaimed Singleton to himself, as he walked about the poop. "Gone! And I did not bid Welwyn good-bye! Mystery on mystery."

While he was thus soliloquising, one of the gaudy shore-boats of the island came alongside. A note was handed to him. It was as follows:—

"'Viper,' *Sunrise.*

"Good-bye, and God bless you—you whose friendship I love, and whose blood I share. We shall meet again. Pardon me, that I don't leave you Ivy's address. In the existing state of things, the most dangerous of all possessions is a heart. Farewell.

"ALFRED WELWYN."

"Ivy's address!" soliloquised Fontenoy. "Her address is—my heart!"

CHAPTER VII.

Where the tall spreading pine,
And white-leaved poplar grow,
And mingling their broad boughs in leafy twine,
A grateful shadow throw . . . .
* * * *
There wine, there perfumes bring,
Bring garlands of the rose.

HORACE TO DELLIUS.
(Bon Gaultier's Translation.)

THE "Kabob," in which my hero now found himself, waiting the arrival of the "Patagonian" (which, not being commanded by a man of influence, was employed on disagreeable duty at a distant part of the station), bore the flag of Sir John Lumper, K.B. The lieutenant who commanded her was young Lumper, that officer's son. Sir John lived on shore, and superintended the dockyard; young Lumper came on board when there was anybody to be punished; the "Kabob," meanwhile, was virtually governed by the gunner, Mr. Bounce, who had the father's ignorance without his rank, and the son's insolence without his whiskers. Mr. Bounce set an example of drunkenness to the

crew, and reported those who followed it to Lieutenant Lumper; Lieutenant Lumper punished everybody but the proper person, and his father the admiral always applauded the man who was in the wrong. The "Kabob" was thus a well-regulated vessel, and a credit to her Majesty's service.

Singleton was the only officer on board; he had all the ward-room to himself; he led a very monotonous life. In the morning he emerged from his cabin, and breakfasted on an omelette and some grapes; he read and scribbled till dinner, or sipped wine-and-water and smoked cheroots; he dined in solitary splendour and went on shore. There he rode out to Slima or somewhere; back, and to the Opera; on board and to bed! This was dull enough. It requires a very strong constitution to stand idleness: Singleton began to get hipped; he caught himself yawning at noon. To be sure, Mr. Bounce, with a condescension seldom found in great men, kindly intimated to him that he would be happy to come in and take a glass of "summat" with him in the evening. The message found Singleton reading "Horace Walpole;" it amused him more than even the methodical sprightliness of that brilliant old fribble. He sent Mr. Bounce a bottle of rum, with his compliments, and declined the interview. Mr. Bounce pronounced him a "*ha*ristocrat," and drank the rum.

Singleton was at a dangerous period of life; he was young and handsome, and had money, and had talents, and, I am bound to add, was vain. The affection he had for Lalage had been eclipsed by Ivy,—Ivy was lost to him; Welwyn was away. He was solitary, and I am afraid solitude is dangerous. Our egotism develops. There is many a fault "born to blush unseen," and grow in the desert of an unoccupied heart.

At a certain period in the lives of all of us—all who *live*, that is—the intellect acquires an undue supremacy; it outgrows the heart and overshadows the conscience. We honour talent above everything; closely associated with this comes the tendency to materialism; the union almost always leads to profligacy. We are fond of argument, and we affect epigram; we learn Pope by heart, and repeat Talleyrand's *mots;* we grow sarcastic, and study Rochefoucauld. Unless some kind, strong influence comes in, we grow vicious; unless we have great talents, we become bores.

There is nothing in our modern civilization that differs so much from that of the ancients as our materialism. Theirs was brilliant and attractive, ours is gloomy and utilitarian. Compare Horace and Tibullus with the tone of the sceptics of to-day. They make life a short and fugitive, but a gay and sparkling scene. Our epicureans are coarse and selfish. Instead of *sym-*

posia and the funeral-pile extinguished with wine, we have heavy dinners and cheap funerals. This, however, is a favourable symptom. Now-a-days the best poetry and philosophy—even the best wit and humour—are on the side of faith and reverence.

But we must all go through the various gradations of feeling. Singleton was now, from position and other causes, under the materialist influence. It is a sad time for a man when he is ashamed of his poetic impulses, and does not care to show his love for another. But Singleton's materialism was of the antique character. He thought that the hours were to be pelted with roses as they flew. He revelled in the gay poetry of him whose verses I have prefixed to this chapter. He was for making life joyous. Well, it was better than the other class of materialism. If man is a worm, let him be a silkworm!

He had been reading one morning, about a week after his joining the "Kabob:" he felt tired, and determined to go on shore. On going to his chest to get out some things for dressing, his eye lighted on a bundle of papers, which had long been overlooked. He opened them. "By Jove! Letters of introduction!" He could not imagine how they had so long escaped his notice. He pulled them out and scattered them on the ward-room table. While he was surveying them, Pug Welby walked in. Pug had been invalided from Marmorice Bay, and sent to Malta Hospital. He had recovered there with marvellous rapidity, and was now living on shore. Fontenoy had made his acquaintance at that café in Strada Teatro which is known as Ricardo's; for Fontenoy, in his present worship-of-talent phase, patronized that particular café out of respect to the political economist. His intimacy with Pug Welby, at present, was one of the most notable symptoms of his state of mind. Pug was a little, dapper, neat, vain, lively person, knowing everybody, caring for nobody—indifferent to mankind, and loving oysters—addicted to play, fond of beccaficos, critical in gloves and wine, with a taste equally ready to decide on perfumes or pictures, dressed admirably, and with a tendency to be accomplished. The last phrase describes him best. An anecdote of him characterizes him to a T. He had quarrelled with his father, and had not seen him for years. A friend of the family met him in the street, and mentioned that he had encountered his father not long before.

"God bless me!" said Pug, with exquisite surprise; "is that old gentleman alive yet?"

He now stood watching Fontenoy without speaking. Fontenoy looked up. "Bless me, Pug, how you startle me!"

Pug gave him a plump finger to shake. "How do? What have you got there? Bills?"

"Letters of introduction."

"Oh, they're no good. You present them, get asked to dinner, get bad wine, and no claret. They'll be 'happy to see you when you call'—bow to you in Florian gardens—'sorry to say box at the Opera always full'—name down in visiting-book, &c. Ha, ha!" Here Pug sneered, "People have visiting-books, sir, in this island, whose proper *libro d'oro* is the ledger."

"I like you, Pug—you like nobody," said Singleton.

"There's no humbug about *us*," said Pug. "But come, let's see who they're to."

Singleton opened one. "Brasely Branton, Esq., Strada St. Coquino — from his uncle. 'Show any kindness in power, &c.'"

"Branton! Oh, I know. A merchant. He has younger sons consigned to him from England, and makes a commission on them by introducing them to the governor. Keeps a list of his acquaintances, with their incomes opposite. Well, go. He gives good dinners, and you'll see people there. Not that there's anybody much worth seeing," yawned Pug.

"Ferdinand Blugg," said Singleton, pitching another letter across the table.

"Banker, with family by an Italian lady—two daughters, with three eyes between them. Has oriental travellers there constantly—fellows who are profound about the spelling of 'nargilly,' and talk about 'him who sleeps at Philæ,' over the soup."

Half a dozen other letters were disposed of. Pug spitted people, like larks, in a row. Poor Singleton; this was a change from Welwyn's conversation!

"Well, dress!" said Pug. Singleton dressed, and they set off together.

"Come along," said Singleton.

The curly-headed boatman, in blue shirt, white trousers, and red sash, pulled away, and they landed at Valetta. The air there was fragrant with that oily, fishy fragrance peculiar to the landing-place. A heat weighed like a load over the town. A group of merry beggars ran up, with their eternal *nix mangiare*, to beg. Singleton and Pug hurried away, and bounded along the stairs of Strada San Giovanni, till they gained the Strada Reale. It was warm with many-coloured life. Officers sauntered; soldiers marched; the Maltese squabbled. Priests walked gravely along, pale-faced, with eyes downcast. Women with the black mantilla arching over their heads, and flowing in Stygian waves behind, glided by. Once or twice one of them raised it as she passed Singleton, and her dark eye gleamed from underneath, like light through trees. Singleton turned to look as they passed away,

and Pug quizzed him about it. Singleton laughed. They passed on in great good spirits.

"Now," said Pug, "what's the order of the day?"

"Oh, I don't know. Suppose I leave my card with some of the introductions?"

"Very well. Let us look in at Muir's shop, and hear the news."

Mr. Muir has a circulating library in Strada Reale, where you go to pass through an hour among books, papers, and magazines, with the semblance of intellectuality. Old gentlemen read the papers, and young ladies dip into Rousseau's "Confessions," and inquire the price of it. Young ladies, it is a work which will cost you a great deal!

They entered. The latest magazines and novels, the newest paper and paper-cutters, strewed the table. The proprietor pointed out the most recent publications with brief, judicious, critical remarks. I have observed that all keepers of circulating-libraries become critics by virtue of their office. The other day I heard one observe that the Chevalier Bunsen was "a clever man—but heavy, sir—heavy!" Our light literature is certainly influencing the age!

Singleton turned over a magazine, and dipped into "Punch." Pug took up the "Malta Mail." While they were thus occupied, a party rustled into the shop. Pug turned round,—"How do you do, Mr. Branton? Let me present you to Mr. Fontenoy. How odd! He was just going to call on you, and leave a letter of introduction!"

"Glad to make Mr. Fontenoy's acquaintance," said Mr. Branton, bowing. He was a tall, stout man, with an uneasy look of dignity, which seemed to sit on him like an awkward shirt-collar. He pulled out his watch, and said, "Will you come and dine with us?"

"*We* shall be most happy," said Pug, accepting for both, with his usual coolness. Fontenoy bowed. They walked out, and Mr. Branton having said "six o'clock," bid them good-bye, and strolled into the club, in the square.

"Do you know the Italian game at billiards?" asked Pug.

"No."

"The Spanish, or the Russian?"

"Neither," replied Singleton.

"My poor boy!" said Pug. "Come, and let me teach you. We English are too isolated; we are insular, and neglect the amusements of the continent. That is the cause of national wars, depend on it."

They sauntered off to a billiard-room. Pug explained the rudiments of the games in question. Under his skilful hand, the

brilliant vari-coloured balls used in them dropped into the pockets as naturally as fruit drops from a tree. Pug was a tantalizing player. When you felt certain he was going to do nothing, somehow or other the balls trickled along like rivulets, just into their proper places!

From the billiard-room they adjourned to a pastrycook's, in the Stradi Forni. Pug drank ginger-wine. "This is innocence," he whispered. "This reminds one of one's childhood. Besides, my boy, some of the women from the Opera drop in here in the afternoons. There,—don't turn your head round like a young stork."

From Strada Forni to Florian Gardens.

The gardens were filling. "You like these, eh, Singleton? This is the Eden of Malta, with three serpents to every Eve! You must not pluck the flowers, but you may speak to the nursery-maids. Look at that pompous cub! How he is got up! He ought to dress well, for his grandfather was a tailor. I've got a bill of his due by *my* grandfather, among my papers. Some of these days I shall pay it to him in Ricardo's. But, hang it, it would be paying dearly for one's sarcasm."

Here "the cub" in question came up to them. He was a newly-joined ensign in a regiment.

"Ah, Welby, how do you do?"

"How are you, Thimbleston? Mr. Fontenoy, Mr. Thimbleston."

Mr. Thimbleston made a slight inclination, and began glancing round the gardens, moving his head in his stock with all the gravity and formality of the figure of Fieschi in Madame Tussaud's.

"Shall we have good races this year?" inquired Mr. Thimbleston, languidly.

"It is to be hoped so," said Pug.

"I think of entering Cucumber," said Thimbleston; "but I don't wish it to be generally known yet."

"Fontenoy," said Pug, with great gravity, "you will make a point of keeping this conversation strictly secret. Thimbleston, you may rely on our secresy."

It takes eight minutes, I believe, for the sun's light to reach the earth. It also takes eight minutes for a sarcasm to reach Thimbleston. They moved on before that time, and finally found themselves, at a quarter after six, stopping at the door of Mr. Branton's house, in Strada St. Coquino. Some flower-pots, with queer plants in them, stood in the hall. Images were stationed in niches as you went up the staircase, like sentries in sentry-boxes.

The guests were grouped in the drawing-rooms in knots *à la*

Stock Exchange. Miss Branton came downstairs a moment or two after the arrival of Singleton and Welby—looking fresh, rosy, and chilly, as a strawberry ice. Among the company (as the newspapers say) were sundry elderly gentlemen, one and all impressed with the notion that Malta was a great and powerful colony, the chief of Britain's dependencies; a consul for somewhere, who protected the interests of two resident hairdressers belonging to his native land; a public executioner, in the shape of a Maltese doctor; two military men; a stray midshipman; and a traveller, asked to dinner on the strength of his having a yacht.

Dinner was announced. It began very brilliantly. Mrs. and Miss Branton interchanged a word or two occasionally in Italian, with that delightful good breeding—the only thing indigenous in the island.

"That was a curious thing, the other day," said Mr. Branton; "the rising of the water in the harbour."

He alluded to a sudden start made by the waters, some time before, beyond their usual level—not before they were wanted, in a sanitary point of view, however!

"Volcanic," said the Maltese doctor. "You recollect, there once rose up an island near Sicily. It went down again in three weeks——"

"Do you know why?" interrupted Welby.

"No."

"Because they named it after Sir James Graham."

Everybody laughed at this sally. "First laugh" to a dinner-out, is as cheering as "first blood" to a bruiser. By a happy coincidence, the champagne, iced in snow from Mount Etna, made its appearance at that moment. Fontenoy and Miss Branton, meanwhile, were opening a conversation, under the distant *surveillance* of the Maltese doctor's wife. Miss Branton asked him in a breath, if he had seen the Palace, St. John's Church, Citta Vecchia, the Catacombs, St. Paul's Bay, and the Opera!

"Only the Opera, of all these, as yet," said Fontenoy, smiling.

"Oh, you must see everything," said Miss Branton. "Do you know Blue-eyed Village?"

"No: what a romantic name!"

"Yes; the people are remarkable for having blue eyes, You should go there."

"I don't care about them," said Singleton, telling a gross fib. The truth is, Miss Branton's eyes were as black as black currants. She simpered.

"Do you like green eyes?" she asked, glancing at the Maltese doctor's wife, who, at last, had turned away her head.

Fontenoy gave a glance in the same direction.

"No: the apples of *her* eyes are crab-apples."

Miss Branton giggled. Fontenoy blushed. Mr. Branton looked at them from his end of the table, and wondered whether he was the eldest son.

After dinner, Fontenoy had the satisfaction, when the ladies departed, of hearing Maltese politics discussed. Considerable indignation was expressed at a recent arbitrary alteration in the value of the dollar. Government had reduced it in value twopence.

"It must be raised again, or we are ruined," said an old gentleman, indignantly.

"Twopence more, and up goes the donkey!" whispered Pug to Fontenoy.

At last the adjournment took place. There was music, and so on, in the drawing-room; the whole concluding with the production of a compound of champagne, curaçoa, and hot calf's-foot jelly, that might have inspired the genius of Catullus. Pug and Fontenoy departed early.

"Well," said Fontenoy to himself, as he was being rowed on board the "Kabob," "nothing is worth living for except pleasure; man is a diviner animal chiefly by knowing that. I wish I had been born a noble in the days of the Regency. As it is, *Vive la bagatelle!* A mere man of pleasure is a donkey: I will unite study with it; and having gained accomplishments, will wear them for ornament, as the ancients wore crowns at supper. The flower that charms my sense shall grace my diadem.—What have we here?"

He had gained the ward-room. A note was lying on the table; he opened it—it was an invitation.

"I must pay an homage to intellect before I go to sleep," he said.

He accordingly took up a volume of Bishop Butler's sermons, and coolly and deliberately studied one of them before retiring.

Such was Singleton Fontenoy's present spiritual condition. But we must not always conclude with the heartless and the dull, that what seems a bad youth will develop into a bad man. The finest oak that overshadows the road you pass, reader, may have grown from an acorn that had been rejected by a hog!

CHAPTER VIII.

Hæc hora est tua, cum furit Lyæus,
Cum regnat rosa, cum madent capilli,
Tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones.
MARTIAL.

A DILIGENT study of Swift, when we are young, lays the foundation of a vigorous style, and gives us a fine, healthy contempt for human nature—a pleasing symptom in a boy! The morning after the dinner at the Brantons, Fontenoy devoted himself to that author. He is the Tower of Pisa of literature. Attracting attention, and made conspicuous by his deflection from the established social line, he is yet remarkable by his grandeur, and as stable as any building in literary time. Probably no man ever had so much fancy, combined with so much of what the world emphatically calls *sense*. Yet the fancy is not beautiful or attractive; his flowers are not odorous; his ornaments—like those of a savage warrior—do not so much adorn himself, as terrify his enemies. He shines with barbaric gold. But gold it is; and Swift has admirers in all classes. He is liked by men of imagination, as well as by mere men of common sense—by the lovers of Tennyson, and the readers of Cobbett.

One of Swift's best effusions is founded on a maxim of Rochefoucauld's. Rochefoucauld was one of Fontenoy's teachers at this time. His pithy maxims have an influence impossible to resist; his little volume is a Delphi of epigrams. He is an oracle, whose wit and wisdom are so wonderfully mixed that you cannot divide them, or apportion them. You feel with pain how much there is impossible to deny of all that you would wish to deny. The fact is, there is no protection against him, except in our best instincts. Let us try him by a fair test. Supposing every man accepted his *dicta*, and acted accordingly,—how would the world go on?

We are not so much governed by the opinions writers teach, as the sentiments they inspire. Swift and Rochefoucauld appeal to men's vanity: they make love to it; a child is born from the union, and swaggers through the world something between Iago and Narcissus.

Tired at last, Fontenoy equipped himself for the shore. He landed at Valetta, as usual, and went to Pug Welby's rooms. Mr. Welby had lodgings in Strada St. Paolo, ornamented with busts turned upside down, and a piano out of tune. Fontenoy found him with two gentlemen—Mr. Bechamel, once before

mentioned; and a clerk in an office, familiarly known as the Peninsular Snob, who lost money at billiards to men whom he disliked, for the sake of getting into society which he did not enjoy. The three companions were sitting in silence, looking at each other, and smoking. Mr. Bechamel occasionally varied his amusement by burning holes in the leaves of a plant in a flower-pot, with the lighted end of his cigar.

Fontenoy was lazily welcomed, and a cigar and chair pointed out to him by telegraphic signs.

"It's odd," remarked Bechamel, slowly.

"What?" asked Singleton.

"Not heard?" said Pug.

"No." There was another pause.

"The squadron's coming in." Fontenoy opened his eyes wide.

"The 'Patagonian' with them?"

"No; she was not made out in the offing. I fancy she's at Beyrout."

"Well, that's good, at all events," said Singleton.

"Yes; but suppose you are sent to her."

"Whew!"

"You don't fancy that, eh? Apply to join the flag-ship."

Bechamel looked up, lazily.

"Ah! perhaps I will. But let us come and dine somewhere."

"*That* must not be neglected," said Pug, emphatically. "Thank God, quails are in!"

They emerged into the street. "Stop, I've forgot my stick. No matter, I will get one here." As he spoke, they were nearing the door of one of those shops where naval men most resort—stores, where they sell everything, from theodolites to *eau de Cologne*—Mantons and macassar—brushes and bouquets—boot-jacks and pickled salmon: where everything is ready but ready-money in payment; and where, if you are not born with a genius for tick, you have tick thrust upon you. The proprietor was standing at the door enjoying the afternoon air. They entered.

Welby wanted a sixpenny stick. They stopped to talk. Welby ordered a box of cigars round to his lodgings. Fontenoy found himself suddenly requiring cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, honey-water, Rowland's kalydor (he was in dread of freckles), and an air-gun!

"A commercial country is supported by credit," said Welby, thoughtfully, as they turned into Strada Reale. Bechamel started off to the auberge, where his regiment had their mess. Singleton and Pug dined at the Mediterranée.

"Let us go to the Opera," said Pug, at dessert.

"I hate the pit," said Singleton, "and I wish there was a ballet."

"Yes," said Pug. "In Malta everything's proper where it ought to be improper, and *vice* (pronounced in one syllable) *versâ*."

"Shall we go?"

"Very well."

They set off. As they reached the entrance in the Strada Teatro, the aristocracy of the island were arriving. The *calèches* of the leaders of fashion hobbled up, one by one, and deposited their burdens.

"This way," said Pug, pulling Singleton to the box-entrance door.

"But we have no box."

"Hold your tongue, and come with me." As Pug spoke, he squeezed Fontenoy's arm, and they moved up the stairs. The functionary who kept the passage half-way up, *looked* for their tickets.

"Is the governor in his box?" asked Mr. Welby, with his usual quiet suavity.

"Yes, sir," said the man, bowing low.

"Come on, Singleton," said Pug.

Singleton followed. They gained the lobby of the first tier. Singleton took Pug's arm, and wondered what was coming next. He was no match for his friend in coolness, and felt considerable embarrassment at the prospect of some audacity which he perceived to be in contemplation.

"Oh, I say, Pug——" he began.

"Peace, my boy." Pug spoke, and immediately began peering into the boxes, here and there. Presently, he opened the door of one. "I beg your pardon, sir! Wrong number. Thank you." The door closed again. They remained like a couple of exiled Peris. Meanwhile, the orchestra began, and there ran through the house the hush and murmur of the opening of the evening.

"This is infernally awkward," said Pug. "Hah! here's one empty." He opened the door, and popped in. 'Twas a quiet, little, neat box, rather far round. Singleton followed without reflection.

"Cosy—isn't it?" said Pug. "Deuced like the room in a bathing-machine. Make yourself at home, old fellow!"

"But, hang it—if the proper owner should come!" said Fontenoy, uneasily.

"Oh, he won't come now. Besides, if he does, it's only a mistake. As a gentleman, he must ask us to stay."

Singleton thought that "as a gentleman" he had no business to be there; but Pug had already composed himself to listen with the tranquillity of a connoisseur, and Madame Philomel, as

a milkmaid, was making the house ring with her love for a peasant (in C). So he calmed his mind, and glanced round the boxes. It was what is called a "brilliant" night. The governor, Sir Ajax Lumber, was in his regal box. The Bluggs, &c., were there. Sir John Lumber was there, with his son John, who had a face very like a baboon by Annibal Caracci.

Madame Philomel told her love to the peasant and the boxes. John Lumber flung two-pennyworth of flowers to her. The wicked baron of ancient lineage but vulgar aspect entered, with his retainers. The *buffo*, as his steward, sang something comic. Pug Welby cried "Bravo!" The *buffo* was his particular favourite, and he used to supply him with brandy-and-water at Ricardo's, when the performances of the night were over. Midshipmen thought it fast to drink with the *buffo*, and indeed, the poor fellow was not more vain, greedy, and illiterate than such "artists" usually are. The most melancholy-looking man in the house was a distinguished traveller, who had exhausted dissipation in London, and was now recruiting a wrecked constitution and character in the balmy air of the south. What to him was this poor imitation of the gorgeous haunts of his youth? What the society of the poor unfledged *roués* about him?—practisers of second-rate iniquity, who took up the cast-off mistresses of the aristocracy, as their valets do their left-off coats!

"Where are you going, Pug?" inquired Singleton, as his companion rose.

"Only into the Bluggs' box—back in a minute."

Pug departed, and Singleton was left alone. Presently he heard a shuffling noise outside the door of the box. It opened. Singleton began to colour violently, and his heart beat high. An old gentleman entered, accompanied by a girl. Singleton's emotions rushed into another channel, for, behold! the couple were—who?—

I call this a situation!

His father and Augusta Lepel? No.

Old Dr. Helot and Lalage? No.

Welwyn and his sister Ivy? Ah—no—no!

"God bless me, sare," said the old gentleman. And Fontenoy recognised his friends of Enupnion—the consul and Adela Mavrosceni!

The orchestra at that moment burst into a long wail of melancholy music.

The Adela gave a little cry of astonishment and delight. The people in the boxes (who reflected that they had not paid their money to see emotion—except acted) looked indignantly at the box. A fellow in the pit cried "Order!" The consul planted himself in front. Singleton sat behind with Adela, blushing and

confused. Her large dark eyes palpitated splendour, and her whole demeanour exhibited the delight of a child.

"We have met again, ah, Mr. Fontenoy. And you don't look very glad to see me."

"I am:—but I am so surprised. 'Tis odd that I should have got into your box. The fact was—" but with the light of those eyes upon him, Singleton could not lie.

"Yes," said Adela, scarcely listening, "there is a law in nature that acts in harmony with the affections, and brings such meetings about. You know who used to tell me so."

Singleton smiled as he recognised his own doctrine, laid down under the shade of the mulberry-tree, in her beautiful island. But he felt that he had changed since then. The girl was as sweet as ever, but she was not the type of all sweetness. The mystical part of his emotion towards her had gone.

"And how are the gazelles?" inquired Singleton, "and the silkworms, and so on?" To his surprise, he found himself inclined to yawn—and Miss Branton, all this time, was turning on the box an opera-glass of the power of Lord Rosse's telescope.

"All are quite well," said Adela, quietly. As she spoke, she turned a peculiar searching glance upon him. Singleton was actually glad that Pug Welby arrived at that moment. Pug having seen his friend quietly domesticated, thought it right to come round to the box, and having been introduced by Singleton, commenced to entertain Adela with a flow of small talk, which made her miserable, and relieved Singleton exceedingly.

At the end of the second act, she touched her father's arm, and told him that she did not feel well. Singleton felt as if he had been stung at the heart by a wasp. He reproached himself bitterly. But what could he do? He offered to escort them home. They were staying at an hotel.

"As you are unwell, I will not disturb you by coming in," he said, when they reached the door; "but I will call to-morrow, and I hope I shall find you better. What a fine night!"

"Oh, very fine," said Adela, quietly; "and really the Opera is agreeable, and very full, and the races will be good this year." Her lip trembled, and her dark eyes glowed, till their pupils swelled like dewdrops. Her father, meanwhile, unconscious of the meaning of all this, passed through the glass doors into the hotel. They were left standing together, under the warm Mediterranean night.

"I have not deserved this, Adela," said Singleton. "Besides, it is not right for you to slight me."

Now, there was whispering at Singleton's ears a devil in the form of vanity, and its cold breath was freezing his heart.

"And what have I deserved?" said Adela, proudly. "You

used to tell me that you loved me; and have you been anything but cold, and false, and weary, since we met again?"

"But, Adela, you are so hasty. Was I to fall on my knees in the opera-box? Girls are so unreasonable!" The last sentence was the wanton effusion of a sudden impertinence.

"Good night, Mr. Fontenoy," said Adela, subsiding into contempt.

"Adela, forgive me. I am not myself to-night. I have met with misfortunes since I saw you. Come, by the memory of the olden time, nymphs, gardens, roses, and the Levant, let us part as we ought to part, and not shame the stars, and the glory of a night like this." He smiled, and bent his blue eyes upon her. Again she searched his whole heart with her beautiful glance. She held out her hand, he kissed it, and clasped her to his bosom. But as he disentangled himself from her embrace—as one who caught in wild rose-bushes, breaks from the fragrant prison—his heart reproached him. And a tear from her cheek was burning into his, as he drew away from the warm enchantment of her soft rich lips.

Singleton turned away from the door, waved his farewell, and walked away, soliloquising.

Sometimes the devil mesmerizes us, I believe, and we speak through his influence.

"Well, well," said Singleton, "behold a new scene in my life beginning. She is a fine, rosy girl, by Jupiter!

> 'At Acme leviter caput reflectens,
> Et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos,
> Illo purpureo ore saviata!'

Well did Catullus know such scenes as this! By Jove, her complaint of my desertion was not unlike the complaint of Ariadne. With Enupnion for Naxos, the thing would do well.

> 'Siccine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab oris,
> Perfide, deserto liquisti in littore, Theseu?'

and well, oh Rochefoucauld, didst thou observe that there is nothing in which *l'amour propre* mingles so largely as *l'amour!*"

He turned into Strada Reale, and looked in at Mula's Café. The squadron had anchored at five o'clock, and a swarm of officers were ashore. You could see the gleam of their epaulettes through the cigar smoke, as you entered the café, and that was almost all. There was a great deal of lively conversation and hearty laughter. Singleton felt elated. As he moved up the room, and placed himself before a mirror to adjust his curls and tie, many a greeting welcomed him from men he knew there: for Singleton, besides being known as one who had signalised himself in the Syrian war, had a general reputation for talent,

and over and above all, "was such a devilish good fellow!" Of course he had enemies—all brilliant men have. But those who disliked him feared his satire, for Singleton carried sarcasm about with him to keep off fools, as we carry a whip to chastise dogs.

He was surrounded by a group of youngsters immediately, all anxious to hear about the plague in the "Viper." In exchange, he learnt everything concerning the "Patagonian." She was at Beyrout, where the Druses and Maronites were squabbling. Pannikin was as well as could be expected. Lord Clarion had gone to visit Damascus, with a stock of brown bread and hard-boiled eggs. Commander Modell was studying Arabic, but had not yet mastered the alphabet; and Primby was taking lessons from a Turk in the art of making Otto of Roses. Meanwhile, officers of all ranks were wearing beards and mustachios, and affecting oriental habits, as they do generally in ships much in the East. So much for the "Patagonian."

"And what sort of man is the new admiral?" inquired Pug Welby.

"Gloomy and surly, rather," said a mate.

"Commend me to the commander," remarked Pug. "He is *serious*. I knew him in the 'Bloater;' used to have the youngsters in and examine us in Scripture history. I sold him nicely, once."

"Tell us, Pug," said two or three boys, eagerly.

"Why, I went and asked for a private interview. I was shown into his cabin, and told him that I had recently been afflicted with spiritual doubts of a distressing nature. I was inclined to the Manichæan doctrines, and begged to be set right."

"Capital," said Singleton. "And how did the poor fellow look?"

"Never saw a man so cushioned," said Pug. "He stammered out that he was busy. But he never bored me with his advice afterwards."

"Cursed ill-bred these youngsters," muttered an ensign, who was sitting near, unnoticed, speaking to Captain Bulrush, of the "Roarer," who was silent—being sober. The syllables caught Singleton's ear.

"Pug," said Singleton, in a loud voice. "After all, Rochefoucauld was often right."

"How, and why?"

"You know what he says. 'L'air bourgeois se perd *quelquefois* à l'armée.' There is a wisdom in the reservation!"

"Hush," said Pug, grinning. "But who was that confoundedly pretty girl that came into *our* box to-night?"

"Ah, that is a history. She is the daughter of the Consul of Enupnion. They are here on a visit."

"I am afraid she don't appreciate lively dialogue," said Pug, ruefully.

"A child of nature, my dear boy," said Singleton, looking in the mirror, with a conceited glance. "But, come, let us have 'a beaker full of the warm south,' and be lively."

"Beakers of the warm south for two," said Mr. Welby. The attendant, whom no eccentricity ever disturbed, brought lemonade and brandy.

About one, a large party of young gentlemen sallied into the quiet and silent streets, bent on amusement. The unreasonable population were all in bed. This was too bad. The Maltese police would not fight: they were obstinately reasonable. But one or two of them just hovered at a respectful distance after the party. Pug and Singleton marched in front; a considerable number of midshipmen followed. The whole band joined in a popular chorus. Presently they arrived at the corner of a street. "I have it," cried Pug. "A grand idea!" He paused. The whole band surrounded him, with looks of expectancy. With a solemn expression, Pug pointed to a dark object which frowned awfully out from the corner house. Like the explosion of a mine, everybody burst into a cheer. "Capital!" "At it!" "Down with it!" "Who's the tallest!" "Bravo!"

The object was neither more nor less than one not uncommon in Valetta—a wooden figure of a saint perched in a wooden cage of angular form on the corner house. The saint was presumed to be the guardian of the district. He was superstitiously dreaded by the populace as crows dread a scarecrow. To pull it down, as was evident to Singleton, excited as he was, at a glance, would create a furious sensation in the minds of the people—would be pregnant with all sorts of mischief; was, at the worst, sacrilege, and at the best, unphilosophical—was a hideous proposal in fact, look at in any way!

But then it was "a lark," as everybody exclaimed. Done it must be. *Nec mora*—a great, big midshipman, of the flag-ship, who ought to have known better, perched himself under it, with his head against the wall, and proffered "a back." Pug Welby, alert as an ape, jumped on his shoulders. He could touch the flooring of the saint's dwelling. Cries of "Go it, Pug!" burst from the party. To do Pug justice, he would have stormed a fort with the same readiness. He stood upright—raised his stick—smash went a glass window in the little cabin. The fragments rattled down like hail. Everybody laughed and shouted. Even in that absurd moment, Singleton reflected on the philosophy of the movement. Since the time long before,

when that tawdry old symbol had been perched up there, what a change of feeling in the possessors of the island!

"It's only a 'pented bredd,'" cried a Scotch midshipman. The poor old saint nodded as Pug strove to effect a landing on his floor. The floor cracked. A fall was impending. Suddenly one of the party cried, "Police." Pug bounded on the pavement like a rope-dancer. And round a corner of the street came, at that moment, a regular body of constables in military order. There was a halt, and they advanced to seize the party.

"Stop," said Welby, "or we'll show fight!"

The naval men gathered together in good order. The big midshipman rushed at the enemy. A baton was used on him. A smart sound was heard.

"That's Tom's head, I'll swear!" cried Pug.

With a huge laugh the party rushed at the foe. A smart encounter took place, and Singleton found himself rolling on the pavement, struggling with a young Maltese policeman, who grasped his throat, and nearly poisoned him with the horrible odour of garlic.

A truce was made. It was agreed that the naval men, overpowered by great odds, should make an honourable compromise, and leave their names and the names of their ships at the station-house. A policeman, who had both eyes coloured, was to have four dollars, and by a special clause the navy was to stand two bottles of wine. The treaty being settled, all parties marched amicably to the station-house, and a reconciliation was made; the whole scene being confoundedly affecting (as Pug Welby subsequently described it), and reminding Singleton of the pathetic delineation of the meeting of Otho's and Vitellius' troops in Tacitus' "History." (Book ii. cap. 45.)

"Now, genelmen, name and 'dress please, sare," said the serjeant; "I no wish keep you, but must give name and sheep."

Paper and pens were produced. The serjeant was no judge of English proper names. The following morning found the officials rowing round the harbour in search of the undermentioned gentlemen, to the astonishment and delight of the squadron.

Thomas Aquinas, Esq., H.M.S. "Jupiter."
Mr. Nicholas Nickleby, R.N., H.M.S. "Caliban."
Pickwick, of the "Bustard."
Hugh McNeile, of the "Kabob."
Sir Walter Raleigh, "Jupiter;"
and
Samuel Johnson, of the "Kabob."

These names written, the party started to go on board, concluding with two final amusements,—racing on the backs of boatmen down the steps of Strada St. Giovanni, at the risk of

their necks; and the time-honoured jest of rolling the little boys, who sleep in barrels—like Regulus—down Nix Mangiare hill. Daylight was creeping in at the port of Singleton's cabin when he laid his fevered cheek on his pillow; his brain throbbed like the chords of a harp that the player has just left; vague, novel images floated before him, and he nestled into oblivion in the embrace of the sunbeams.

* * * * * * *

"Wanted directly, sir!" There was a sharp, repeated tapping at his door,—"tap, tap, tap," like a shower of acorns in a storm. Singleton started from a sound sleep: "Death must be like that sleep," he thought; he bounded out of bed.

It was only Welby; but he looked uncommonly serious. How strange, a sudden seriousness in a trifler; it awes and mocks us, like the paint on the cheeks of a dead clown!

"What's the matter?" inquired Singleton. "Heavens! how ill I feel." His eyes were heavy with languor; he tore at the bell-rope; "Coffee—tea—quick, steward. Well, Pug—about last night?"

"Such a row! That d—d image was found this morning by the plebs (curse them) as we left it. It seems they fancy that the Greek sailors in the harbour did it, out of spite against the rival religion!"

"What a mockery; what a farce; what a commentary on religious differences!" cried Fontenoy, with a bitter sneer. "Michael, tea, do you hear?" He commenced eating grapes, and laughing violently; his head throbbed with it.

"Well, there's been a sort of riot; the Greeks are in danger."

Singleton turned deadly pale; he thought of the Mavroscenis.

"However, that's tolerably arranged; it seems a guard was sent to the place. It's known now that some of the squadron were the parties; there will be a regular inquiry; but we must lie quiet. You and I are best off, waiting for our ships; come ashore at once, land on the Burmola side, and spend the day in the country."

"The Mavroscenis will be safe? I ought to call to-day."

"You cannot," said Pug, decidedly.

"Poor Adela!—hang it. Curse all my folly," muttered Singleton. Pug turned away, looked out of the stern windows, and began whistling. Singleton felt a growing indifference to him, but then, had he not sought his society, and encouraged him? He had no right to preach. He went on breakfasting. While he was doing so, a heavy parcel arrived from the shore, full of things which he had ordered. While making room for them, his

eye fell on his father's last letter, and he tore it up in disgust, and flung the fragments into the sea.

They took some *gloria*. Singleton dressed; put an elzevir in one pocket, and filled the other with cigars. They hailed a boat, landed at the extreme end of the creek, and walked away towards the interior of the island.

'Twas a beautiful warm afternoon: they came to a house that had once been the residence of some family of gentle blood; in the half-neglected garden behind it, fragments of sculptured stone—the bones of a balustrade—lay among the flowers; they found that it was now a sort of inn. They had chairs brought under an almond-tree, and they sat there, and sipped lemonade and smoked, and sprawled on the grass. Pug plucked a long stalk of it and made a slip-not, and laid in wait to snare the gaudy lizards, as they glided from the stones. Singleton watched him and moralized, and grew calm again and talked lightly.

"What slaves we are of our bodies—everything depends on them," he said; "this morning I was remorseful, for I had a headache,—now, I am well, and don't care for anything."

Pug came and sat behind him, and leading the conversation by degrees, came out with the fact that he had a scheme; he did not mind saying that he had partly brought Singleton here for the purpose of discussing it,—Singleton's curiosity was excited.

"You remember that ass, Thimbleston?"

"Yes."

"The fool has got in debt [by the bye, what were Pug and Singleton doing?]—he must sell Cucumber. Now, *I know*," said Pug, solemnly, "that that horse has the best chance; in fact, a fellow who was present at the exercising a few mornings ago assured me so.—*I* can ride.—Buy Cucumber!"

Singleton laughed. "All I know about horses would shame a baby!"

"No matter; *you* are not expected to know these things." (This was said as a compliment, and had the effect of one.) "But you may own the horse. You will win money by laying on him; if he wins, you can sell him for half as much again."

"The money!" exclaimed Singleton.

"You are an only son, and your father is a man of property,—the estate is entailed; you can *raise* money. I know a man in Strada —— who does that kind of thing."

The debate went on. Singleton, influenced by a dozen sentiments—love of excitement, vanity, a wish to be a Crichton, fond-

ness for Pug Welby, &c.—yielded, and put himself in his friend's hands.

Next evening, at the cafés, after some talk about the recent "general order," in which Admiral Gloomy (successor to Stopford) had treated of the image row—and after a good laugh at the fact rumoured about, that the priests had told the populace that the saint had been saved by miraculous interposition,—the prevailing topic was the coming races. Everybody had learned that Cucumber had been bought by Fontenoy of the "Patagonian," and that Pug Welby was the "gentleman rider." Cucumber's name after the purchase was altered by Singleton to "Æneas:" this was almost the only step he had power to take in the arrangements about his own horse, so completely did the science of the accomplished Pug make him supreme!

That same evening, Singleton sat two hours on the balcony in front of the Mavrosceni's rooms, and discoursed with Adela concerning mysterious sympathies and the "desire of the moth for the star."

"Ah, Singleton!" said Adela, "this reminds me of the island—our island; I love to be elevated above the dull cares and duller pleasures of the world. And we are so:—are we not?"

CHAPTER IX.

Quem tu Melpomene, semel
Nascentem placido lumine videris,
Illum non labor Isthmius
Clarabit pugilem ———

HORACE.

He on whose natal hour the queen
Of verse hath smiled, shall never grace
The Isthmian gauntlet, or be seen
First in the famed Olympic race!

BISHOP ATTERBURY'S Translation.

"MISS BRANTON, will you do me a favour?" said Fontenoy, with a comic look of supplication.

He might well be anxious; Miss Branton had considerable coldness, which her friends called dignity; and some rudeness, which they christened *hauteur*. Pug Welby called her the Deuce of Diamonds. Pug was matchless at nicknames, and stood godfather to everybody that had a *soubriquet:* Singleton, who was felicitous in description of a different class, compared her to the red snow at the North Pole—rosy and cold. She had great talents for annoying people, and, somehow or other, cultivated her faults as she ought to have her good qualities; she knew

how to slight poor men, or unpopular men, or unfortunate men and could keep up during an evening a stream of annoyance as paltry and disagreeable at once as a draught through a keyhole. But she dreaded ridicule, and Singleton, if he had liked, could have impaled her on an epigram. Perhaps she liked him more than she did most people,—but Miss Branton prudently killed all imprudent feelings,—a moral infanticide common now-a-days. Society is becoming a burial-club for the emotions; we poison our loves and hopes, and put them out of the way—for the sake of what we get for interring them. Well, well!

"What is it, Mr. Fontenoy?" said the lady.

"Your party on the 10th, to which you have so kindly invited me, will, I know, be brilliant. I beg to supplicate a card for two particular people.

"Who are they?" inquired Miss Branton, with a quiet determined air.

"Mr. Mavrosceni, consul at Enupnion," said Singleton, with an elevating tone; "a man of ancient Greek family, and great diplomatic skill,—a man of property . . . ."

"And?" inquired Miss Branton, slowly.

"Oh," said Singleton, quickly and very carelessly, "if you ask him, you must ask his daughter—a little girl . . . . . it would amuse her, poor thing! . . . . She wants to see the world . . . ."

Miss Branton enjoyed his confusion as people do jelly. She inwardly resolved to ask them—with the proviso that Miss Mavrosceni should wear her native dress! For Miss Branton aspired to be a Lion Queen. She had already secured Buzz, the Oriental traveller, and a professor, and goodness knows whom, and Adela might pass for a lioness cub, she reflected, very well.

She looked grave, begged that Miss Mavrosceni would wear her native dress, and finally arranged to give her mamma the necessary orders. Singleton expressed his gratitude.

"And how is Æneas?" inquired Miss Branton.

"Oh, in famous condition. Welby assures me he shall win."

"Put a beggar on horseback—isn't there an encouraging proverb?" she said, with a sneer. She hated Welby.

"Really, you are cruel," said Singleton; "sarcasm seems strange from such lips—it's like—

> ——— 'the bees of Trebizond,
> Which from the sunniest flowers, that glad
> With their pure smile the garden round,
> Draw venom forth, that drives men mad.'

as Moore tells us."

Nobody else dared have told Miss Branton as much. But she smiled.

"I frankly confess I don't like him. In fact, I should like to

be revenged on him!" she said, suddenly, with a malignant look, that made Singleton feel sick.

"*Marry him*," *thought* Singleton. And with a smile on his lips, apparently of good-nature, but which was the enjoyment of his suppressed sarcasm, he rose, made his bow, and finished his morning call.

Next, he started to the Eagle Hotel. The Signor Mavrosceni was out. Adela was at home.

"Why do you grin, you rascal?" he said to the Maltese waiter, as he passed him. The wretched man was presuming to look *conscious* as he showed him up! Foreign servants never seem to me to be able to acquire that appearance of total indifference to what is said and done, which is such an art among their English *confrères*.

Adela was alone. She had opened the folding window-doors of the balcony, and was kneeling down watering some flowers. Her long black hair flowed loosely about her. She jumped up, as the door opened, with her usual *naïveté* and grace. "Well, can I go?"

"Is that the first question you ask me?" said Singleton, half ruefully.

"Oh, we don't talk forms. I know you are well. You look so!"

"And you, too. Providence said, 'let there be light,' and there was—Adela Mavrosceni!"

"You did not make these high-flown speeches in Enupnion," said Adela, whose intuition taught her that it was not a good symptom by way of change.

"I am improving," said Singleton, quietly, and he went and plucked a flower. Adela darted forward.

"For shame. Do you know that killing a rose is murder?" And as she spoke, the ghost of the murdered rose blushed grateful in her cheek!

"You have a good deal of fancy, my Lucent," said Singleton.

"Well—do I go to these people's party, or what they call it?"

"Ah—I had forgotten."

"Singleton!"

Singleton felt convicted, and looked frightened, as he saw the large eyes quivering with emotion.

"My dear Adela, you must not be so sensitive. If you are so very sensitive, you can never expect to be happy!"

She muttered something and turned away to the window.

"Yes, you are to go, of course. I promised, did I not? You will be the flower of the party." She remained silent. "I will recover her," thought Singleton.

"Adela—come. Pardon my carelessness. When I am with you, I forget everything!"

She turned round, and smiled again; and then she began to talk about the party, and her seeing the world. There was a strange blending of native simplicity and girlish vanity in Adela. She was a beautiful flower that would not bear transplanting. Perhaps it would have been happy for Fontenoy if he could have retained enough of his primary enthusiasm and simplicity to have devoted his life to her, and her obscure lot. The Persians say, that the nightingale, when he sees the rose, becomes intoxicated. But, oh, reader! if you carry the bird off, and cage it in a town, will it ever be able to feel that glorious delirium again?

"You will look like your native Ἑλένη, Adela," said Singleton, congratulating himself that he was broaching the costume question with great tact. "I should like to wear a Greek dress. It would be better than our conventional commonplace. But I must wear uniform."

"But should I wear our Greek dress!" said Adela, opening her great black eyes wide. "Mamma would never have thought of such a thing."

Singleton did not like to hear her allude to her mamma or relations. But he did not show this, so Adela escaped seeing *another* bad symptom of the altered state of his feelings.

"She was an English lady. You are more than half Greek. It would be thought right, I assure you; and you will look so much better than the other girls!"

Adela smiled, and a little while afterwards Singleton went away. "Dear me," he muttered to himself, as he strode along the street, "what an innocent thing she is!" And then he coloured, and was presently lost in a maze of perplexed reflections. But he had an engagement with Pug Welby and two or three men at three o'clock, and he was obliged to keep it. The day of the races was drawing near—

> The great, th' important day, big with the fate
> Of Cato and of Rome ———

as he quoted to himself, while sauntering anxiously along.

The island was in a fine state of mental activity. Æneas stood uncommonly well, but there were hideous rumours afloat respecting the barb of a man in the Rifles, by name Cheroot. (Cheroot was the name of the horse, the owner's was not of so much importance). Jacky Splay—a pleasant, lively mate of the flag-ship—was to ride one horse, and he was now ashore every morning, in the morning watch, exercising him. The immortal Benbow would indeed have been astonished could he have risen from his grave and seen that portentous spectacle!

And what would he have said could he have seen the servant of Tomkins of the "Jupiter," walking the gangway four hours at a time with his master's patent-leather boots on, to stretch them for Tomkins' use, on that important occasion! Meanwhile, "sweeps" were being organized on board every ship. The regiments were as eager as men on the eve of battle. Ensigns became enthusiastic, and passed from the London Primer to a betting-book. Every man who had won or lost on the Derby, or the Oaks, became an authority, and added a cubit to his stature for the nonce. To have been inside the ring at Epsom was a distinction:—to have betted with Lord —— was an honour:—to have had a jockey to breakfast was something to boast of!

Singleton, all this time, had been going to Pug's rooms. Pug was looking anxious, but dissembling his emotions, and was now sitting with two other men at the table, making calculations on a card with his gold pencil-case.

"Sit down, Fon—speak to you directly," he said. The two other men honoured Singleton with a tolerably inquisitive stare, then glanced at each other, and rose to go away. After they had gone, Pug looked up, and somewhat anxiously, too.

"I'm glad you are come, old boy."

"Anything the matter?" said Singleton, uneasily.

"Not particularly, but I am fagged. Three days more, and—whew! Are you heavily engaged?"

"Here is my book," said Singleton, with a melancholy smile. "I took your advice, you know, and took 'ten' wherever it was offered."

"That you have, by Jove!" said Pug, looking at the work in question.

"I think I shall publish it, and dedicate it to the Jockey Club," said Singleton, yawning, smiling, but not over comfortable. "'Μεγα βιβλιον, μεγα κακον,'—by my troth, the man who said that was a true prophet and seer."

"You take it coolly, Singleton. But, by Jove! my boy," said Pug, lowering his voice, "if Æneas don't win, I'm completely floored: and that's a *mild* way of putting it!" As he spoke, he grew very serious, and his open, sunburnt face paled from its hazel tinge.

"Well, well," said Fontenoy, "we must stand the hazard of the die. I'll do what I can for you; and, faith! if the worst comes to the worst—that is, if Æneas comes in last—the governor must exert himself! The axe, sir, must startle the wood-pigeons near Heatherby! Birnam wood must come to Dunsinane, and be sold as timber!"

Pug laughed. "What are our colours to be?"

"Oh, blue and buff. Let us patronize the Whigs."

"Are you going to the Brantons' to-morrow night?"

"Yes; and you?"

"Yes," said Pug; "I shall drop in late, just as one of the late quadrilles is 'placed.'"

It was the night of the Brantons' party. Everybody was there. What with naval men, military men, and ladies, each quadrille looked like a tricolour flag. "And how did the civilians look?" inquires a reader of a peaceful profession. Like the stick that supports it, my dear sir. The Maltese doctor was there, in his favourite costume of snuff-colour—

> . . . long, and lank, and brown,
> As is the ribbed sea-sand!

His wife had a turban, which suited her admirably as a Tartar! Mrs. Branton was sumptuous, and her daughter as stately as a white poppy. She was in a very good humour, for there were two or three grand old gouty gentlemen of great rank, among the guests; and Miss Branton, like the Earth in the "Princess," was—

> . . . All Danaë to the *stars*!

and as complaisant as possible. Mr. Buzz, the Oriental traveller, with a grave beard of formal cut—a man made to be stared at—attracted no inconsiderable attention, to his great delight; and, happily, was quite unconscious that it was more to his hair than his distinction, that he owed the flattering notice. Now-a-days, people are getting so obstinately philosophical, as to imagine that to have been to the wall of China, or the Pyramids, is, of itself, no mark of superiority. They ask *what he has brought away?* when travellers are mentioned. To have been to Egypt—*That* has been the fortune of several mummies; but we don't ask them to dinner in consequence!

It was late when Singleton entered the rooms. His cheek was a little pale, and his eye anxious. He made his bow to Mrs. Branton, and glided to the side of her daughter. As he interchanged a few words, his eyes kept wandering round, every now and then. Miss Branton saw it, and *thought a smile.* "They are come!" she said.

"Who?" asked Singleton.

"Your Greek friends."

Singleton smiled and bowed, and presently stole away.

Seated at another part of the room, he saw Adela Mavrosceni—all her romantic beauty shining in the scene—like a fair picture when the light falls full on it. He approached. The lady of the Maltese doctor was sitting by her side. Two or three gentlemen were chatting near her, and looking at her occa-

sionally. It was impossible not to look at a creature of so much natural grace. She shed attractions from her as a flower sheds its leaves.

"Ah, Singleton, how glad I am you are come at last!" she said, smiling. The Maltese doctor's lady looked astonished; the knot of loungers whispered among themselves, and one of them, a tall rifleman, with an aquiline nose, gave the most delicate of all imaginable glances in their direction.

"Who is that fellow?" whispered No. 1.

"Fontenoy, owner of Æneas," said No. 2.

"Oh, the doose! I couldn't laugh if I was. I have not laughed these five years, not since Ranter's year," said No. 3, with a sigh.

"Poor boy, I fancy Pug Welby's his instructor."

"Somebody ought to write to his father," said No. 1, indignantly. (No. 1 had been laying against Æneas right and left, and was now afraid he might run first after all.)

"Well, he begins early. Let us come and have an ice. It's awfully hot."

And the group departed.

"Who is that girl in the masquerade dress?" said a young lady in a female knot, further off.

"Masquerade dress!" giggled No. 2; "she's a Greek lady!"

"Is there such a thing?" yawned No. 1. *(Gigglunt omnes.)*

"She is *rather* good-looking," said No. 3, timidly.

"*Do* you think so?" said No. 1. "Something theatrical about her! Isn't there now?"

"Yes, yes, how true!" said Nos. 2 and 3. At that instant, Pug Welby, whose eye instantly told him what these amiable girls were saying, moved over to them, determined to dislodge them. Up he came, smiling.

"Good evening, Miss ———," (naming No. 1). "I have not seen you dancing much!"

"It's so hot," said Miss ———, awkwardly, and suppressing a better reason.

"Just so! But, bless me, who is that beautiful creature?" exclaimed Pug, with enthusiasm.

"The—which do you mean?" asked No. 2.

"There can be no mistake; the sweet-faced Grecian?"

"Nobody seems to know," said No. 1, rather spitefully.

"Well, *she* is worth inquiring after. She is beautiful."

"Not my style," said No. 1.

"*That* is perfectly true," said Mr. Welby, with a bow. "Some Greek lady, I suppose."

"We were wondering if there is such a thing," said No. 3. *(Gigglunt omnes,* again.)

"Oh, I fancy there may be Greeks who are ladies, as well as English who are not," said Pug, laughing blandly.

"Dear me, there's my aunt," cried No. 1, and away she went. Nos. 2 and 3 began to talk about the races. Pug strolled off.

Meanwhile, Singleton was sitting with Adela. She talked to him with so much vivacity and intimacy, that various people looked at them. Singlaton felt confused and ashamed. I never, for the life of me, could understand why we are so sensitive about the opinions of people whom we neither admire nor respect. But we are. And Singleton, as he saw one or two eyeglasses, and some eyes quite sharp enough without these optical aids, turned on himself and Adela, felt miserable. Mrs. Yahoo looked at them as she would at a brace of partridges, and thought, "Bless me, what would his relations say? Such intimacies can only lead one way."

Well did the great Goethe observe, that if the people who hold themselves surest of heaven are to get there, he did not care to be one of the party!

"You don't look happy, Singleton. I think, after all, your nature is best suited for retirement."

"You do me honour, Adela," said Singleton, feeling painfully how little he deserved the compliment.

"Ah! last summer," mused Adela, plucking her bouquet to pieces.

"Bless me," thought Singleton, "are we to have a scene?"

At that moment there came up a young midshipman, a boy of fifteen, to speak to Singleton. He was at once as effeminate as a girl, and as vicious as a gladiator. Of a noble family, and very good-looking, he was much courted. But there is scarcely a vice practised by mature profligates which he did not play with, as a girl does with kittens. He strolled up, dressed in the extreme of profusion and elegance (and at that time the dandies of the navy thought it fine to depart as widely as possible from the regulations about uniform)—languid as yesterday's roses, as Ovid says, and odorous as a vase. He ogled Adela with his fine soft eyes, which he played like Thackeray's Blanche Amory, a character of which he was in some respects the male prototype.

"Well, Fontenoy, how do you do—nervous, eh? How is Æneas?"

Fontenoy coloured. Of Æneas he had never said a word to Adela, and she looked up rather surprised.

"Very well. Do you offer anything?" he said, laughing as carelessly as he could.

"My book's made up," drawled the boy. He glanced slightly at Adela's figure, and moved on—to flirt in another quarter of the room with a woman old enough to be his mother.

Singleton turned to Adela. She was apparently absent and preoccupied: she would not dance—would not have refreshments—would not explain—wanted to go home. Afraid of a scene, Singleton pretended not to see that anything was the matter, sought out her father (who was playing chess with the Maltese doctor—a crack performer, who studied Lolli, and played the Evans Gambit), and told him she found the rooms too hot. They went away, and Singleton remained behind, *distrait* and remorseful. He hunted up Pug Welby, and they made their *adieux* before supper, and went off to visit Æneas in his stable. He was looking glorious; a dark grey barb, slight, vivid, and active as a pulse.

"If he knew what depended on him!" said Singleton, in a moralizing mood.

Singleton slept that night on a sofa-bed in Welby's rooms. They kept up a conversation long after they had retired to their respective rooms, through the open door.

The day arrived. It was extremely fine—warm, but with a breeze; dry, but not dusty. The Pietá was crowded with horsemen, and all kinds of vehicles. The race was to take place on a long road by the water-side at Slima; the Grand Stand was duly erected, and preparations made worthy of the Olympic Games.

Singleton trotted out to the scene of action on a pony: he did not care to be bored by anybody's company in a carriage. The neighbourhood of the Stand was crowded; the Maltese boys were perched on the walls; boats were swarming on the water, like summer insects. Midshipmen and *gamins* of the islands galloped up and down the course; military men in tops were running about everywhere. But the grandest sight of all was Mobblin of the "Bustard," who made up for his want of genuine tops by turning his ordinary Wellingtons outside his trousers! Unconscious Mobblin! type of a thousand shams, more honoured and less respectable.

The scene was rich in the elements of comedy, in earnestness about trifles, in pretension without reality, in sham brilliancy like paper fireworks.

The horses were placed for the first race. Captain Smugg, of the Rifles, flogs one desperately to make it stand and give a fair start; it rears,—the captain is pushed back into the water.

At last comes the great race. Æneas, Cheroot, and Cabbage are led majestically out. Pug Welby, blazing like a rainbow in his silk jockey's jacket and cap, pops the light saddle on his left arm, and trips gaily into the weighing-room,—the horses are marched off to the starting-post,—the bell rings. Higby, the

clerk of the course, canters up and down, and, with great gallantry, lashes several Maltese off the road with a long horse-whip; everybody laughs, Singleton Fontenoy included; he has just finished a pint of Moselle, and is wondering where he will be, and what he will be thinking of, that time twenty-four hours,—a grand subject for an anxious man.

The air rang with shouts—the road thundered with echoes; three horses were seen like cannon-balls in the distance. The grand stand becomes mad,—Singleton's head swims, and he stands in his stirrups like a man preparing for a cavalry charge.

Æneas ran last; pulled up short—came down,—broke his own knees, and poor Pug Welby's leg.

CHAPTER X.

On desperate seas, long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home,
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.
EDGAR A. POE.

THE packet from England came in that evening; there was a letter for Singleton in his father's well-known handwriting—he was almost afraid to open it—at last he tore away the seal. It was short, and informed him that his father wanted his co-operation in raising money by a mortgage, which he could not do without it.

"He must pay for it," said Singleton, laughing gloomily. He went off to the money-lender to whom Pug Welby had introduced him,—he told him he must have more cash; papers were to be signed,—he was ready to sign anything. Glorious bags of dollars were produced, rich, round, and heavy as grape-shot. He made an estimate of his debts,—Æneas he sold for a comparative trifle,—he found he could pay his debts of honour, and determined, like Prospero, "deeper than ever plummet sounded, to drown his book!" What business had he to meddle with such matters? He resolved that he would reform; he would study Arabic, and translate "Al Koran;" he would join a small craft, and serve away from Malta. Once he thought of going home across France, and serving on another station; and then his thoughts turned to Adela. Suppose he went to Signor Mavrosceni, and proposed to marry her? He could go with them to Enupnion,—become vice-consul,—grow mulberry-trees, and feed silkworms. It would be a beautiful exile—but to live

amidst such people—to dwell in a land where new magazines never reached, and Hansard was unknown! He was too English for that! Well, should he marry Adela, leave the service, and go home? What,—to live in a cottage where they would be visited by nobody, in a climate where the soft Greek would be certain to have bronchitis!

Here Singleton rang the bell (for he had been carrying on this debate after dinner in the Mediterranée) and ordered some more wine. He continued to debate. It was one of those occasions when a man's soul and his body resolve themselves into a committee; and, somehow or other, the body generally gets the best of it. Oh, for a Sterne to chronicle the discussion! 'Twere worthy of the sweet wisdom of Augustine Caxton, in his fanciful hour.

The Body having taken the chair, the Soul moved that they should unite to aspire. The Body moved as an amendment after the words aspire—add, "with the aid of wine." Wine was ordered. The Body pronounced him serviceable, and an excellent witness. The Soul grew languid. The Body began to be triumphant. Enough,—enough.

Singleton rose, and left the hotel. It was a strange exhilaration that he felt now. He could pay his debts—thank God. The worst was postponed. Meanwhile he was young. More,—he was loved! He felt as if he could have kissed the fresh air as it came wantonly from the sea. All the poetry he remembered rang in his head like the echoes of bells. He strode along the streets with the tread of a young athlete. It was ten o'clock at night. The night was glorious. The breath of the young Greek seemed to mingle with the air. Ha! he would go and see her. He stopped at a shop, and looked in at a mirror. His face was flushed, and his eyes restless and fiery.

He arrived at the hotel of the Mavroscenis. The waiter came to answer the bell.

"The Signor Mavrosceni—is he at home?"

"They are gone, sir!"

"What!" cried Fontenoy. "What do you mean, knave?" He gave a look so startled and fierce, that the man shrunk back, astonished.

"They sailed this evening, sir."

"Let me pass!" cried Fontenoy, brushing by him; and seizing a lamp, he ran up to their rooms. He flung open the room in which she usually sat. It was deserted. Cold, and silent, it struck upon him like the air of a vault. He opened another door, and saw a little bedroom. The white curtains drooped like a shroud. Here was the shrine, but the goddess had vanished.

At that moment the landlady of the hotel came waddling up-

stairs, and with a becoming appearance of sympathy, handed him a little note. Singleton crushed it in his hand, and bounding downstairs, ran out of the house. He stopped at the first light he came to, and read as follows:—

"Miss Mavrosceni presents her compliments to Mr. Fontenoy, and thanks him for his kindness, on the part of her father and herself, during their stay in Malta. They are fortunate in having fine weather for sailing."

The satire was exquisite. Singleton was stung to the heart's core. But his first impulse was anger, and he soliloquized, "Ah, but it is not so easy for you to forget, *mia cara*. This is assumed." Then he tore the note into a hundred fragments, and scattered them to the wind. He rushed off to a café, got some more wine, and poured a libation on the ground—Jovi Liberatori—in imitation of Seneca.

"What the devil are you about?" exclaimed a voice. He looked up. There entered the young midshipman who had spoken to him at the Brantons' party about Æneas.

"Nothing that you can understand," said Singleton.

Dulcimer stared; then sneered, languidly. "Were you heavily let in?"

"What do you mean?" asked Fontenoy, angrily.

Dulcimer yawned. "You are not yourself, to-night, Mr. Fontenoy."

"You are—unfortunately," said Singleton, sneering.

"Here, Zoe!" Dulcimer whistled; his little Persian greyhound came bounding up to him. He bowed formally, and walked out.

"I should not wonder if that boy challenges me," thought Fontenoy, laughing; "everything seems to be prematurely developed in this island, except the intellect."

He seated himself, moodily, at a table, and plunged into a strain of reflection. A party entered; they were mostly men with whom he was on very friendly terms; his feelings took another turn, and he received them with uproarious good spirits. He asked after Pug Welby; Pug had been taken to the Naval Hospital in Bighi Bay; his leg had been set, and he was going on very well. Singleton resolved to visit him next day. The Naval Hospital had been turned into a kind of hotel, by some gentlemen in ill-health there; they smuggled in wine, smoked cigars in unfrequented parts of the grounds, and administered pills to the deputy-surgeon's chickens! Nothing was wanted but a billiard-table, and this could not be got, unfortunately, though Snibbs, of the "Jupiter" (who was suffering from *febris desidiosa*—or lazy fever), suggested that one should be set up in the dead-house!

Fontenoy told the newcomers of his tiff with Dulcimer. To do Singleton justice, it must be said, that at this worst period of his career, if he insulted anybody, he was always ready to shoot them, afterwards; what can a refined society expect more!

The night was spent, as many more had been, in idleness and revelry. Singleton fell asleep on the cushions in a billiard-room, and awoke at daylight. The table looked a ghastly green in the morning's rays; the players were pale and haggard. Just as Singleton awoke, the youth known as the Peninsular Snob, flung *another* five-pound note across the table to the man he was playing with; the marker was leaning on the long cue—forward, and dozing; at every click of the balls he started, and mechanically called out the numbers.

"Twenty,—twenty-four."

"Spot's twenty, you d—d fool," shouted the "Peninsular," correcting him; the man altered it, stared stupidly, and leant again forward. Again Somnus waved the Lethæan branch, and his swimming eyes closed. Again the "click, click," awoke him. A melancholy sight!

There was not long afterwards a sad story about the "Peninsular;" his debts grew heavy; he determined to fly. When the steamer from Alexandria arrived, in quarantine, he boldly went on board her, for a passage to England; but he was put on shore at the Lazaretto, and after serving the whole of her time in quarantine, had to come out and face his creditors!

Singleton awoke; he recognised where he was, and yawned; his dark hair was wild and tangled; his eyes looked as if they had been dressed *à la Tartare*. He sat up, and looked on; suddenly he rose and left the house.

The morning was beautiful. It was now getting late in the year, but the mild air of summer still lingered, as love lingers after passion is sated and dead.

Singleton strolled down to a part of Valetta that gave him a full view of the sea, and leaning over the forts, cast his eyes far and wide. How sweet and fresh the breeze was! One or two vessels were in sight; he wondered, as he looked at them, where they were from, and what they were doing on board; he sat there a long time, musing and thoughtful. Then the bells of the churches began to toll. 'Twas the day of one of the innumerable saints of the calendar; and suddenly an impulse struck Fontenoy; he would go into St. John's.

Welwyn's words recurred to him; he determined to act on his impulse. He moved towards Strada St. Giovanni: in another minute he was standing inside, and enjoying the serene and solemn splendour of the temple of God. A calm fell upon his soul.

He looked tranquilly around and above. The figures on the gorgeously-painted roof seemed ready to fly. He stooped, and read the epitaphs of the Knights of St. John on the flagstones. He was attracted to one by the great similarity of the arms sculptured on it to his own. The knight had died young. *Egregiâ pietate*, he was, said the record. And Fontenoy thought how differently *he* must have been employed on this island. He blushed before the dead knight's epitaph, as if he had met his eye.

Looking up, he saw a young girl enter the church. She wore a mantilla, which concealed her face,—but not the beauty of her figure—not the grace of her movements! His eye followed her. She glided to the confessional.

Fontenoy watched and waited. As she moved towards the door, he saw her face. It was Ivy Welwyn! She did not see him. As she went out of the church, she was joined by an elderly woman. They walked away quickly. Singleton saw a Maltese whom he knew. He gave him a dollar, and told him to follow that young lady, find out where she lived, and report to him on board. Then he turned once more into the church, and wandering about, mused. Presently, he leaned against a column. His mind was miserable—his nerves weak. Tears came into his eyes.

"My son, are you ill?"

Fontenoy looked up. A priest was standing before him. His pale, mild Italian face, his soft dark eyes, had a look that was soothing. Singleton shook away his tears.

"I am better, thank you." And pleased at the stranger's kindness, he entered into conversation with him. The church was now nearly empty.

"I was just reading the epitaph of that knight," said Singleton, pointing to it.

The priest glanced at his uniform. "You are then acquainted with the Latin language?"

"Yes. It is a noble tongue. It is like marble—fit equally for building palaces, or being cut into chimney ornaments. It is magnificent in oratory, and admirable in epigram."

The priest's eyes brightened. "You speak well," he said, calmly and paternally, though he was young.

"One of our writers remarks that it is unjust to speak of the Latin as a *dead* language," said Singleton. "Consider its daily employment in the Catholic Church—the *Roman* Catholic—your Church, I mean," he said, colouring slightly.

The priest bowed. "The unity of language preserved the unity of faith, during the ages when tongues were changing. The Latin language kept Christianity in itself—as the mummies

in Egypt are sometimes found to have grain in them, which still vegetates."

"I admire your metaphor," said Singleton; "and how well you know our language! It is not native to you?"

"No," said the priest, quietly. "Do we go the same way at all?" he asked hesitatingly. "I am going to cross over to Burmola."

"I am going that way," said Singleton.

They left the church together. As they walked down to the landing-place, they continued to converse. Without saying a word of encouragement, or courting Singleton in the least, the priest yet attracted him prodigiously. They got into a boat.

"Will you come on board?" asked Singleton, as they got alongside his ship.

"Thank you. I should like to see a ship," said the priest, gently. They went on deck, and descended into the ward-room. Singleton ordered breakfast, and offered the stranger some tea. He accepted it. Singleton showed him his books. His name was written in them.

"Your name is Fontenoy. I have heard that name before," said the priest. "My name is Adda."

"We must know each other," said Singleton, warmly.

"You are kind," said the priest, gently.

And he bowed, and turned over the leaves of the "Colloquia" of Erasmus, which he had taken up. Singleton smiled.

"Ah! that was a fine-minded man," cried Singleton, laughing.

"A half man," said Father Adda, mildly.

"Shall I show you the most delicate sarcasm that was ever penned?" said Singleton.

Father Adda made no opposition. Singleton turned to the dialogue called "Charon." Charon is complaining that his boat is leaky, and wants repairing. His companion suggests that he should repair it with wood from the Elysian groves. Charon says that the groves are all used already. "Used for what?" asks the other. "*For burning the shades of the heretics,*" is the reply.

Father Adda gave a grave smile. Singleton turned the conversation to the Church of Rome; his companion seemed to avoid it. They resumed the subject of literature; Father Adda was thoroughly familiar with it, and astonished Fontenoy by the copiousness of his knowledge and the elegance of his language.

"You must allow me to visit you," said Fontenoy at the close of a capital sketch of Dryden delivered by the priest.

"Will you come now?" asked Adda.

Singleton consented, and dressed himself: and they set off together over to Burmola.

They stopped at the door of a small house: it was opened by an ugly crone. They went upstairs: Singleton was very much affected by the sight of the room in which he found himself.

It was an apartment of moderate size; at one end was a bed without curtains, and with sheets and blankets of coarse texture.

Everything was rugged and poor—the table, the chairs, the carpet. Nothing in the room was handsome but a crucifix of ivory; nothing plentiful but books.

There were books everywhere: the table groaned with them; they loaded shelves, and littered the floor. The coal-scuttle stood on a folio; a leg of the table was propped by a quarto. The cat slept on Bellarmine: a broken plate reposed on St. Augustine. Thomas Aquinas was snug in bed; and a "Life of Ignatius Loyola" nestled in the father's nightcap.

But you saw evidences that the divine was not only the theologian of a Church of hoary antiquity, but the member of a powerful confederation, strong, active, and of to-day. There were the latest Journals and the newest Reviews—the "Tablet"—the "Times"—Reports—Blue Books—German, Italian, and French papers—Oxford pamphlets, and Brussels editions—the latest fruits of the Tree of Knowledge lay scattered before you there! The father was an epicure in his taste for Knowledge. He got the first copy of a new pamphlet as people in London get forced strawberries and early green peas. Honour to such men—be their creed what it may!

They sat down. Lemonade and rusks were produced. Singleton and Adda sat together for two hours. When Fontenoy returned on board, he had under his arm a "Life of Loyola" and Bishop Wiseman's "Lectures."

He paid his debts of honour; gave over going to parties; stayed on board a great deal; and was constantly at Father Adda's. He gave up his dandyisms and dissipations. Behold him in the evening, seated at the stern-port, reading! A Maltese enters.

"Well, Missa Fontenoy, I find her at last!"

Singleton looked up. "Whom do you mean?"

The man answers, "The young lady of St. John's Church."

Singleton closed his book, and remained for a few minutes silent and thoughtful. Should he tell the man that he did not want to know her address? It was a moment of perplexity.

Love conquered—as he must and will. Doctrines may be false—but Cupid is a sound divine. He took down the address, and that evening he went ashore.

He walked out from Valetta to a village, came to a house with a large garden, and entered the garden by a broken gate.

There among the orange-trees was Ivy!

He walked up to her with a beating heart. She started with astonishment, and her cry, her gesture, and her flush, told Singleton that he was loved.

As she saw him, and started, she let fall her string of ebony beads.

Singleton picked them up with a charmed reverence, and gave them to her — though a month before he would have doubtless reflected in his epigrammatic way, "How like these are to the general run of priests, being wooden instruments of prayer!"

But not so, now. With the spiritual revival, had come the true love.

BOOK IV.

HOME.

CHAPTER I.

And fear'st thou, and fear'st thou,
And see'st thou, and hear'st thou?
And drive we not free
O'er the terrible sea,
I and thou?

SHELLEY.

It is a dark and stormy night; the wind is howling a death-rattle through the throat of the Channel. Heavy line-of-battle ships lie doggedly, three anchors down, cables veered out, lower yards and topmasts struck, in the Sound. It is a night when seamen swear and women pray!

It was especially bad in the throat of the Channel; the moon was at her full, and had driven the ocean mad; the wind tore up and down the black waters, and every now and then, a crash of thunder rolled all round heaven.

Presently the moon rolls grandly out from behind a black cloud, as if she had just been shot, all fiery, for the first time, into space. By her light, which streams in a golden oil over the waves, a brig is made visible. Stunted-looking, with top-gallant masts down—bare and ragged, with close-reefed main-topsail and storm-trysails,—she labours heavily and sulkily along. It is H.M.'s brig "Viper," and this is her welcome home! let us transport ourselves on board.

Welwyn in his cabin, muffled in a huge coat, with a tarpaulin hat on, takes the lantern and looks at the barometer,—no change,—the mercury is cowering low down. Welwyn feels the brig jump and tremble as the waves thump against her ribs, he buttons his coat resolutely, and pushes up the narrow companion-ladder; a flash of lightning meets him on deck. As he reaches the weather-gangway—bang! bang! goes the brig's head against the water, a sea breaks, and hissing down heavily, wets everything fore and aft with one tremendous shower.

"Ugh, ugh!" said Mr. Block, the master, who was in charge

of the watch; "a man might as well be a Newfoundland dog." The brig here plunged and kicked.

"What do you think of it?" asked Welwyn, looking drearily to windward.

"Bad, bad, bad!" said Block, shaking his head. "It's blowing great guns, and I've nothing to oppose to it but a pocket-pistol."

Here the brig kicked again, as if disgusted at the master's joke; Mr. Block pulled out the pocket-pistol in question, and drank some brandy.

"If we knew where we were," said Welwyn, rather uneasily.

"Let's heave the deep-sea lead!" suggested the master.

"Watch, heave the deep-sea lead!"

The men began to crawl out from where they were huddled, under the top-gallant forecastle,—the heavy lead was produced and armed,—the line was passed along fore and aft.

"Let go! Watch there, watch!" passed from one end of the brig to the other. The lead plunged, the line whizzed, the reel span,—presently it was hoisted up again,—a lantern was brought, —Block inspected the armed end of the dripping traveller.

"Well,—what does it say?"

Block paused. "We must be cursed near the coast of France," he said.

"I'll wear, and lay to," said Welwyn, with calm decision; "turn up, everybody—wear ship." He seized a speaking-trumpet—the men trudged to their places.

The helm was gradually put up, and the weather-braces rounded in,—the brig's head fell off from the wind,—then, she gave a swoop to leeward, and seemed preparing to fly ahead; a sea, meanwhile, gave her a slap astern, and flung the little dingy that hung there on board in a twinkling. But she rounded to on the other tack quietly, and having been a long time struck on the starboard bow, held the larboard to the sea, in return, with great resignation,—and now there was nothing to do but to keep a good look-out, and wait for morning. The brig rose and fell doggedly, but stuck to her place.

Welwyn waited on deck a long time, but there was no change. At last he thought he might retire to his cabin, for a little rest, —he left word that he was to be called at daylight, and lay down on his cot.

Daylight came — as it comes after stormy nights — sullen, gradual, and grey; the sea dawned into a kind of ashen light— dirty and sickly-looking,—it foamed like a huge ocean of porter; the seamen began to move about the soaked deck, weary, wet, and wrinkled.

The wind moderated; they bore up on their course, after some consultation between Welwyn and the master. They shook a

reef out of the main-topsail, and set the reefed foresail. The brig vibrated and leapt along, shuddering and rolling; Welwyn's servant crawled up with some coffee. He sat down on the stern grating to sip it, when the look-out man cried, "A sail."

"Take the glass, and look at her, quartermaster," said Welwyn, sipping the hot coffee. "A homeward-bound Indiaman likely."

The quartermaster looked, and muttered something or other.

"Why, she seems in distress," he said.

Welwyn got up, and looked in the direction to leeward, that had been indicated. As the brig neared, there to be sure was a craft—a poor, maimed yacht, with her beautiful wings clipped, and looking like a wounded butterfly. It was a real object of nautical sympathy to a moralizing man.

The quartermaster did not share the feeling much, apparently, for he growled out that he wondered what business they had out on such a night, and that it "was a tempting of Providence." In the eyes of a quartermaster, Providence has the sympathies and feelings of a post-captain. But such notions are not confined to such classes. I fancy we most of us judge Providence according to notions of our own.

"We must run down to them," muttered Welwyn. The weather was still moderating, luckily. The brig "kept away" a little, and started with fresh speed. As they neared the yacht, she seemed more and more helpless. She was a beautiful schooner, and her line of copper flashed as she rose every now and then on the waves. But her masts were broken, and she had a jury rudder.

Welwyn took the speaking-trumpet, and hailed her. There was no answer. They saw nobody. The schooner rose and fell, and seemed helpless. Presently, however, a hand waved something above the bulwarks. It looked like a flag, or a piece of silk.

Welwyn and Mr. Block were watching her from the lee gangway. The brig had hove to, to windward.

"It's a d—d pretty wreck," said the master, sentimentally.

"Shall we send a boat?" inquired Welwyn.

"In this sea?"

"It is not so bad as it was. I'll go," said the youthful commander.

A boat was got out, and manned with a picked crew. She put off—Welwyn aft, with a keen eye and an intrepid heart, guiding the coxswain. The boat plunged, but she was well managed. She drew near the schooner. A line was passed, and Welwyn and some of the boat's crew got on board over the stern. The first object they encountered was the figure of a man lying

rolled up, with a red nightcap on, apparently asleep. The coxswain went to him, and shook him.

"All — right — old — fellow," muttered the sleeper. The "Viper's" men began to laugh. "He's drunk, sir," said the coxswain, to Welwyn.

Welwyn moved on—found some more of the crew in the same state. He set his men to work to repair the schooner's damages, as well as it could be done. Then he descended into the yacht's cabin.

It was a melancholy scene that met his eyes. The floor was strewed with the wrecks of shattered luxury,—shivered mirrors, spilled wine, crystal, and silver, — and crushed flowers, and spoiled books and prints,— porcelain that had crumbled into gold dust, and fragments of glass sparkling like beads. The air was heavy and close. The panels of the bulwarks were defaced; the green silk curtains lay in fragments on the floor. And Welwyn's eye caught a soiled, white, small glove, lying like a smashed lily.

He stood for a moment in astonishment. Then, putting his head up the ladder, he ordered the cabin skylight to be opened. As he called out, he heard a noise in an inner cabin. The door suddenly opened—

"Great Heaven—where is my father? And Welwyn saw a tall and beautiful girl, wrapped in an enormous shawl, and with her hair hanging in wild black ringlets down. Her face was pale with terror and anxiety, her eyes painfully bright.

"All is safe," said Welwyn, hurriedly. "I have come from her Majesty's brig 'Viper,' to take charge of the yacht. The gale is over."

The girl blushed suddenly red. Welwyn stooped down, and began picking up the fragments of the broken things, to avoid causing her any disagreeable confusion. At that instant, the fresh air and light came from the opened skylight, most gratefully, and a great rich gleam of sunshine lighted up the cabin.

Welwyn thought it best to go on deck for a little. The brig's men were busy putting things to rights. The weather was fast moderating, still, and sail being made, the schooner began to move through the water, towing the "Viper's" boat astern. A little boy, apparently a cabin servant, was running about on deck. Welwyn called him—

"Whom does this yacht belong to, my boy?"

"Mr. Lepel, sir. It was not his fault, sir."

Here the boy looked frightened, being apparently afraid that his master would be subjected to castigation by the naval authorities.

Welwyn smiled. "But what brought the yacht into this state?"

The boy went on to tell him, that the schooner had left Plymouth Sound on a cruise, a few days before; that the gale had blown them off the shore! that the sailing-master in charge had been taken ill (which meant, had got drunk); and so the yacht had soon become helpless.

As he finished the narration, the master came up to Welwyn, very coolly. He rubbed his eyes—"Ah, leeftenant; a roughish breeze we've had, ain't we? I s'pose you'll leave us, now we're all right agin!"

"Certainly not. The schooner being in distress, we take charge of her," said Welwyn, quietly. And he turned away his head, and looked at the brig, which had made sail, and was standing on in a line with them. The master kept, however, standing close to Welwyn, with his eyes fixed on him, and his hands deep in his pockets.

"Want the salvage, s'pose, leeftenant, eh?" he said, twiddling his thumbs, which were outside his pockets, like crab's claws.

"I have answered you," said Welwyn, turning away his head.

The man stood immoveable, grinning, with eyes fixed on him, and moving the hideous red thumbs as before.

"Eh, leeftenant, he! he!" he began.

But just then, the coxswain, who had been watching the proceedings with great disgust, and was aware of Welwyn's quietness, suddenly came behind the master, and seizing him by the collar, hurled him on one side. The master gave the same stupid leer, and presently composed himself once more to slumber.

Welwyn sent the boy down into the cabin, to inquire after the gentleman and his daughter. It was only his duty!

Back came a message, "Would he come down."

"Collins," said Welwyn to his coxswain, "keep the schooner on in the brig's track. Let the hands refit the rigging, and so forth."

He went down the ladder to the cabin again. Things were, by this time, pretty well put to rights. There were sitting at the table, our old friend Mr. Lepel, and Augusta. Mr. Lepel was older and feebler than when we saw him last, in appearance, and alas! in reality, too! Augusta was—Augusta. What more can we say! A little taller and more graceful—a little milder and more intellectual—with brow all thought, and eyes all mind, she looked like what she was—a cultivated English girl!

"We owe our safety to you, sir," said Mr. Lepel.

"We had, certainly, a rather rough night," said Welwyn, smiling; "but these are our common duties in our profession. Happy those whose duties are such that they must naturally be their greatest pleasures, too!"

Poor Welwyn had not found that such was always the case, but the sentiment occurred to him, and he wished to please those he was with.

Augusta looked at him with some surprise. "I think you said your brig was called the 'Viper?'"

Welwyn bowed.

"Then surely, papa," cried Augusta, turning to her father, "was not young Fontenoy in that vessel?"

Welwyn smiled. "I can answer that—he was; he left us at Malta just before we sailed."

And then there occurred a long interchange of questions and answers concerning my hero, of whom Welwyn spoke, as he thought, with great esteem and attachment. This led to more intimate communion between him and the Lepels, and they invited him to visit them at Plymouth. Shortly afterwards, Welwyn returned to the brig, leaving the coxswain and some hands on board the yacht.

The vessels anchored in Plymouth Sound next morning.

And now Welwyn was plunged into the business of paying off the brig, and was deep into the news of the navy. The Admiralty sent him down his promotion to the rank of lieutenant, and he received a letter from a high authority, complimenting him on his conduct while in the "Viper."

Plymouth was as lively as usual, full of naval men "mooning" about Union Street, &c. &c. A most interesting court-martial was being held on board the flag-ship, upon Snoggles of the "Beaver," a lieutenant, who, during the recent gale, had reported the sheet-anchor ready for letting go, at a time when about twenty seamen and their wives were suspended on it, in their connubial hammocks. A happy accident prevented Snoggles' report from being acted upon, otherwise, the persons most ignorant of naval matters in the country, must be able to guess what a frightful doom would have befallen the slumbering couples.

Snoggles was tried—took the affair very coolly—made a sarcastic defence, with many damning exposures of the discipline of the "Beaver"—and was sentenced to be put "at the bottom of the list of lieutenants," a post for which he had been sedulously qualifying himself for many years! Sentence having been duly passed, the philosophic Snoggles departed to the continent,

there to live quietly on his private means, and his four shillings per diem, half-pay; and may be seen, I am informed, by the curious, at most of the places of note frequented by English travellers abroad.

The "Viper" was soon paid off. Brunt hurried up to London to prepare his work on the plague, and to enjoy the luxury of dissection, of which he had been so long deprived.

One morning, Welwyn went to the hotel where the Lepels were staying.

"Ah, Mr. Welwyn," said the old gentleman, "we thought you had forgotten us. I have disposed of my yacht, and we are going home to Rockshire; will you come down and visit us there?"

Welwyn paused. He glanced at Augusta, but she was looking out of the window, and playing with her gold chain.

"You are very kind," he said, "but I must first go to some relations. But I will join you afterwards there with pleasure."

The door opened. "Well, Fred?" said Mr. Lepel. Welwyn saw a young man, who had obviously just arrived by the coach, enter the room.

"How do, sir—how are you, Augusta? It's very chilly, this morning. Awfully cold I was, coming down in the coach, and perched opposite a Methodist parson. Freezing!"

Mr. Lepel, junior, here removed his cashmere handkerchief, and looked at Welwyn.

"Lieutenant Welwyn—my son Frederick. This is the gentleman who saved us, you know, Fred," said Mr. Lepel.

"Very glad to see you, Mr. Welwyn," said the philosophical Radical and Alcibiades of the Manchester School; "I must have a talk with you about the navy estimates!" He spoke this with that fatherly air which young gentlemen who are getting on precociously in the world assume towards their coevals. His sister glanced quietly at Welwyn, who bowed. Welwyn fell into the mistake common to persons of the idealist and romantic class of intellect—of looking down on the practical men. The fact is, the latter have not only their own cleverness to go upon, but the world's cleverness to back them.

"That was a dreadful scene!" said old Mr. Lepel, reverting (as he was apt to do) to the gale. "What a night that was!"

"Ah—you must have found it terribly cold!" said Frederick, moving close to the fire. "When will the "Times" be down?"

CHAPTER II.

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow, that lies floating on the floor,
Shall be lifted—nevermore!
"The Raven," by EDGAR A. POE.

As Frederick spoke, he warmed his hands with that hearty relish for physical comfort which most demagogues have. Since we last saw him he had been "getting on" famously. He was "up" in all sorts of facts, and was considered a very promising young man. A London wit described him as one of those youths who wear white chokers and marry widows. One meets such gentlemen about—very quick and penetrating—very ready and sarcastic—more intimate with their elders than with people of their own years—reducing everything to utility, and never even reading without a distinct view to material gain.

Frederick, I say, warmed his hands with a hearty relish. By little and little, I must add, he was growing more selfish—but it was that kind of selfishness which is not easily seen in particular instances. You don't find it out for a long time, and by the aggregation of many cases—and then the harm, whatever it may be, of the acquaintance is done!

"Yes, very cold it must have been," he added, vaguely, for his thoughts were wandering somewhere else. Mr. Lepel, who had a wonderful opinion of his son, smiled.

"Let me see," said Frederick, standing upright before the fire, with a parliamentary air, "I never come anywhere without seeing what there is to be seen. Mr. Welwyn, will you come over the dockyard with me."

Welwyn consented, and they left the hotel together. They entered the dockyard, and inspected the various parts of it. Everywhere Frederick was keen-sighted—calculating expenses, viewing improvements, and pondering on alterations. Welwyn, who looked at things from a totally different point of view, seemed silent and stupid. Frederick made various experiments on him. It was his way. He regularly investigated and classified every new friend.

As they were standing looking at some patent anchors—a recent invention—a gang of convicts passed.

"Look there," said Frederick, moralising. "A very important question is convict labour. Now these poor devils there

are criminals by necessity. Statistics show that there will be so much crime, just as there will be so much grass or cabbage, per year. They can't help themselves. Then, consider the particular social influences — poverty, ignorance (and Toryism, added Frederick, with a grin)—and what right have we to punish them? Our primary duty is reform."

Welwyn looked thoughtful. "It is very melancholy. Every one of these beings is a dormant good man. By nature, each is a possible goodness. An impulse of the soul might transform any one of them."

Frederick coughed—an under-secretary-receiving-a-deputation sort of cough—and pulled out a snuff-box. He had recently taken to snuff, and used dandiacal mixtures.

"Ah! you are a reformer, then, like myself," he said, scarcely knowing what to say.

"I am not a reformer, but I admire reform," said Welwyn. ("A conservative trimmer," thought Lepel.) "I am an optimist, I confess, in spite of Rasselas and Candide. Everything will come right."

"You believe in Peel?" said Frederick; the time being that of his administration.

"Chiefly in Providence," said Welwyn, with one of his grave smiles.

Frederick laughed, and thought him a mystical sort of fellow, with some brains. They walked along, and came to a gigantic shed, where there was a line-of-battle ship on the stocks. The name of Hildebrand was painted over her "120." In her then state, with her mighty ribs bare, she looked like the skeleton of a mammoth.

"There goes the public money," said Frederick, with a laugh. "What think you of our naval expenditure?"

"It has never occupied my attention much. Do you know it appears to me that an officer who is always thinking more of reforming his business than of *doing* it as he finds it, is not the best possible."

"By Jove," said Frederick, "I'd fling that in Charley Napier's teeth if I was on the Treasury bench. But, you know, such ideas would stop all reform."

"Somehow I don't like the practice of reform, as it is carried on in this country," said Welwyn, musingly; and they turned away from the shed.

A party of *matys* were crossing just before them.

"Now, these seem intelligent, active men," said Welwyn.

"Yes—and every man of them has a vote, sir!" said Frederick. ("A biped with a vote" would be an accurate definition of *homo*, according to the creed of some people.)

They passed out of the gates, and returned to the hotel. Frederick, as they walked along, talked a great deal more about reform and reformers.

"I tell you what I think of the reformers," said Welwyn, smiling.

"Well?" said Frederick, with curiosity.

"Oh! no, it's of no consequence," said Welwyn, correcting himself, and feeling, perhaps, that he was stirring from his serene tranquillity by even giving an opinion.

"Tell me," said Frederick, pausing on the foot of the stairs.

"That the country is suffering from disease of the heart, and that their treatment is to crop its hair and beard!"

"Well, we will do it close, you'll see." And they moved on upstairs. Welwyn stayed to dinner, and went in the evening to a party at the Port-Admiral's. Next morning, he started with the Lepels, by coach, to Exeter.

London! "Jolly old London," as Washington Irving well calls it. "The best place in summer, and the only place in winter," as James Smith, also, did reasonably say. To Welwyn it was a grand dream—a floating cloud with a million of figures—he cared nothing to stay or to examine it. He went, *pro tem.*, to Hatchett's—Mr. Lepel and his daughter started for the north—Frederick remained in lodgings in Grosvenor-street. Frederick was busy!

Welwyn had little to do. He went to the Admiralty; he went to his agent's. In the whole town he had not a friend, and he had not that acquaintance with London, which, joined with a philosophical spirit, makes the town itself a society.

What did Welwyn care for a town which neglected Swedenborg, and idolized George Brummell? To be sure, there were some naval men about—there were some at Hatchett's. These, however, were generally youths who were going through the orthodox course—who had come of age—dropped into moderate patrimonies—started cabs and tigers—and were laying in a stock of poverty and anecdotes for their next cruise. Then, there were some men he knew of another class—steady old lieutenants, who lived near the Strand, and dined at the Crown, in Rupert Street. Red-faced old gentlemen, who took a little wine, and a great deal of rum-and-water, and looked at the "Navy List," and talked about Jellicoe and Bird Allen. What had Welwyn to say to them?

Frederic Lepel was in London, to be sure. Welwyn did not care for his society. But here was the difference between them—Lepel liked him well enough. They differed, radically, in character, but here was the superiority (if so it may be called) of

the practical man, that he availed himself with equal indifference of everybody—being always bent on his career, more than his individuality,—while Welwyn esteemed the maintenance of *his* spiritual individuality a matter of principle. The distinction is worth studying.

One day, Welwyn was going up Parliament Street, having been musing in Poet's Corner for an hour, when he perceived a Hansom cab, rushing violently towards his side of the pavement. He caught the features of Mr. Frederick Lepel, who waved his hand, and made a gesture to him to stop. Frederick patronized Hansom cabs very much, being of opinion, that in safety, rapidity, and compactness, the Hansom was a type of modern civilization. He had given up his Brougham, impelled, as he said by economy; but as he spent the money in other ways, this was no great saving. He was not the man to expend anything for the sake of show—and besides, show was only necessary to supply the want of substance. Solid, industrious young gentlemen of brains had no need of it, he reflected.

"Come in!" he cried, as the cab drew up. Welwyn sprang in, without much consideration, and away they rattled.

"You seemed very gloomy. Have you no friends in London?" Frederick asked.

"No," said Welwyn.

"It is very empty just now, certainly—though as the Duke of Queensberry used to say, 'it's fuller than the country!' Come to my rooms."

The cab stopped. They jumped out. The door was opened by Lepel's servant, and they went upstairs. Frederick occupied a drawing-room floor in the house. There were one or two busts in the room they went into—an engraving of "John signing Magna Charta"—ditto of the "American Declaration of Independence," — and the "Death Warrant of Charles the First." A plain oblong table occupied the centre of the room, and at one end of it was a waste-paper basket big enough for a Druidical *auto-da-fé*. There were two well-filled bookcases, and there were heaps of papers and pamphlets of all sorts—"Letters to a noble Lord," and "Remarks on the present Crisis," &c., scattered about—also, minutes of the House, and parliamentary documents.

"Excuse me," said Frederick; and he began to open some letters, from which it might have been conjectured that he had not slept at home the night before.

But Welwyn had seen the "Death Warrant," and his thoughts were wandering back to the day when Whitehall witnessed the terrible expiation of all the follies and falsifications of that king,

from whose blood, like to the blood of Ajax, sprang the flower—English liberty.

He was startled from his reverie by a sharp "Tish!" from Lepel. Lepel laid down a letter which he was reading, and looked up. He rose from his chair.

"Well, it is certainly odd how things come about. It is the strangest thing that I should have met you on this very day of all days."

Here he rang the bell.

"Charles, I shall dine at home."

"Yes, sir."

"Wait a minute. Mr. Welwyn, had not you better stay, if you have no engagement?"

Welwyn thought of the coffee-room at Hatchett's—the noisy man, who usually dined opposite him—the fat old country gentleman, who wrangled with the waiter about the port till he was "red in the face," having been previously more than red in that part of it called the nose—and accepted.

"I have asked three or four quiet men to-day," said Frederick.

"Well—make it all right," he said, dismissing the servant.

Frederick's business habits did not extend to domestic details. So long as he had what he wanted, he let his servant do what he pleased, and was plundered, not from ignorance, but because he could not be bored about small matters; though, perhaps, he never attained the sublime indifference to personal economy of the distinguished Alfred Bethnall Green, Esq. (who was often at Dunreddin), who usually went to M——'s at the beginning of the season, and gave him £2,000, with instructions to "make it go as far as he could," which, we may be sure, was not very far, at Green's favourite pace.

When the servant left the room, Lepel resumed. He took the letter up, and threw it down again.

"This is from Mr. Fontenoy. You knew the son in the 'Viper,' did you not?"

"Certainly I did," said Welwyn, with some surprise.

"Was he going on curiously? When I used to see a good deal of him, he was a promising fellow enough; but had what I call a mental green-sickness—a sort of disorder of the imagination and unhealthiness of the intellect—which resulted in desultory exertions and transient attachments."

Welwyn was somewhat struck by this little speech. All the external liveliness of Lepel which belonged to his temperament vanished while he was making it. He looked intelligent, serious, and sensible, giving an idea of what might be expected of him in his earnest and aspiring hour.

"There was nothing very curious about him that I remember," said Welwyn, quietly. "He was not like very ordinary persons, certainly, for it seemed to me that he was of imaginative tendencies; and as they develop themselves before the mind is thoroughly formed, the youth of those who have them is sometimes what is called eccentric."

"Well," Lepel said, "do the imaginative tendencies make people buy the favourites for garrison races, and raise money from Maltese money-lenders?"

Welwyn drew himself up with surprise.

"I should hope not."

"Fontenoy has been doing it, then," said Lepel, taking up the letter once more. Welwyn made a gesture to take it. Frederick turned down the part alluded to, and pointed out the words. Welwyn read, and was astonished.

"That is what dullards call 'sowing their wild oats,'" said Lepel, who seemed very much annoyed.

"It is a vulgar phrase, to describe a vulgar thing," said Welwyn.

"D—n it!" said Lepel, muttering some words to himself. And then he went on with the letter.

"Now, this *is* rich, ah! ah!" he exclaimed.

"What!" said Welwyn, drumming nervously with his fingers on the table.

"There is a postscript which says that he has taken a new whim. Nothing will suit him now but Roman Catholic haunts. So, his father learns from a friend in the island. 'Gad, this reminds me of Hoggles, of the "Weekly Rattler," who, on the pope's death, t'other day, sent round a card with

HOGGLES FOR POPE!

on it!"

Welwyn was in no mood for a joke. He looked very grave and sad.

"I tell you what," said Lepel, "you're only his messmate, and, of course, don't know all about him; but I suspect——"

Welwyn was on the point of stopping him, but had not the courage.

"I suspect there was some mystery about his mother which may be influencing him now."

Welwyn coloured very deeply. Lepel's keen glance lighted upon him. "Ah!" thought Frederick, "he knows something of it." But Frederick did not guess how much, or how deeply the fortunes of Welwyn and Singleton were intertwined, or that it was blood of Singleton's that was blushing in the face before

him, or that *his* projects would be influenced by the circumstances which he was thinking of!

The servant came to lay the cloth. They went into another room to wash their hands. On their return, the men who had been invited were assembling. They were chiefly members of that large class of young gentlemen who are thronging the gates of the professions now—offshoots from old families from which the younger branches are getting more and more distant every generation—cousins and second cousins of great people who are scarcely aware of their existence, but whose pedigrees, arms, and connections, these young gentlemen have at their fingers' ends. Conservative by hereditary sympathy, and yet Liberal by education and aspiration, why should not this class be a most important element in the work of the future? Yet everybody seems to be more active—more influential in this country—than a youth of the better orders. Some thousands of the best educated, and the most *avancés* youths of the day, are by their own supineness, and the present state of the suffrage, excluded from all share in the conduct of the state. I suppose, for example, that a hundred of the mob vote for every artist or student—that twenty coalwhippers have more votes amongst them than fifty average readers of Tacitus and Carlyle!

Among the guests was our former acquaintance Mr. Bones, of Oxford, who had now gradually developed into one of those portentous unions of dandyism and Puseyism, which amuse the philosopher in Pall Mall—tailor-made saints—trying to be enthusiasts, with half misgivings that they are fools,—disciples of a system, two parts credulity and one part affectation!

There was a young barrister who had written a pamphlet, and wore spectacles; there was the brother of a Liberal member; there was a statist in *embryo;* there was a leading-article man. All more or less clever—all working men, and pushing men—quite free from the petty affectations of judgment in wine and French cookery, which make many ridiculous, who might have been only harmless. The only one properly ridiculous was Bones. He had recently brought out a volume of poems, and written an absurd preface dated "Eve of St. Kilderkin." Frederick only asked him on this day, because he could not stand him alone. You required to take him well mixed with people of common sense!

The dinner was of the quiet class. The conversation skimmed politics, hovered about personal matters, and made flying dips into literature. The leading-article man unfortunately remarked that poetry was on its decline. Bones looked aggrieved. The leading-article man, poor fellow! was unconscious of offence. He had never heard of "St. Ursula's Nightcap, and other Poems."

Frederick gave as a toast—

"The people, the only source of legitimate power." It was half-comedy with him.

"What do you say to that sentiment, Welwyn?" he asked.

"I look for a higher source," said Welwyn.

"Talking of poetry," said the leading-article man; "give me the man that can write a leader?"

"Well, Pinion, I agree with you. I declare that for three who can write verses, novels, or essays, there is not one who can write a leader," said Lepel. "Mind you, I mean a good one!"

Pinion bowed.

"I should think the 'feeler' must be the most difficult of the *genus*," resumed Fred.

Pinion looked modest.

"What is the 'feeler?'" inquired the barrister.

"Why," said Lepel, "when you want to know how public feeling is turning, and write a mysterious prolusion, that satisfies everybody, without communicating anything, or committing anybody!"

They all laughed, and looked at Pinion.

"Talk of Delphi," said Frederick, giving the port (the only wine he 'hung out,' as the elegant phrase is) a vigorous push; "they never beat one of Pinion's 'We's!' You know I'm a judge: I once owned a paper. And wasn't I let in!"

"I myself had a young one," said Pinion, pathetically; "but——

'Abstulit atra dies,' &c.

it died, and made—no profit!"

"Have you seen "The Lays of Ancient Rome?" asked somebody, across the table.

"I never read poetry," said the statist.

"Well—but that has nothing to do with the "Lays," said Pinion, with a chuckle.

A little after this period in the conversation, Lepel's servant came into the room.

"What's the matter?" inquired Frederick.

"Beg your pardon, sir—is one of the gentlemen's names Welwyn—a-staying at Hatchett's, if you please?"

Welwyn started. Who could want him? And who had traced him here?

"What is it?" he asked. "That's my name." Frederick dropped the nut-crackers and looked up. Bones started and spilled some wine over his "High-church waistcoat," or "cassock waistcoat" (as they call them at Cambridge). Now-a-days, the University tailors seem to have the power of canonisation—formerly confined to the pope. It is a grand sight for a cynic to see one of them recommending to the spiritual enthusiast—waistcoat that *looks like a hair-shirt!*

Welwyn hurried downstairs. In a moment he returned again. His face was serious, though not agitated. He apologized, and said that he must go.

"It's a great pity. Let me see you soon," said Frederick.

Welwyn bowed and departed.—In half an hour he was rolling along, out of town, between two rows of tall elms that glided by him like the mourners in a funeral procession. On, on—in the direction of the Northern Star.

He sat in a post-chaise, and was whirled over the Great Northern Road, through a rich level country, dotted with little dells, like dimples, and varied by undulations as gentle as the mark left on a pillow by the pressure of a fair girl's head. It was the close of autumn. Earth seemed to have had her locks shorn to relieve the summer-fever. The fields were bare and rough—gristly with stubble, and seemed deserted for ever. Scarecrows that had done their office were rotting slowly at their posts.

It was a melancholy time, and it was a melancholy way. For, now that the current of national blood runs in other channels, the Northern Road is bare and empty all day, as the dry bed of a river. Only outcasts and wanderers wearily drag along it, and leave red marks from their bare feet on its dusty paths. And, wretched above all is its autumnal wretchedness, when the hedges are bare and ragged, and the trees have little heaps of dead leaves lying at their feet.

Drearier and drearier it grew in the dusk, when every succeeding tree became dimmer, and the landscape on either side was heavy with blackness, except where a solitary distant light lay like a fallen star. Welwyn leaned back in his seat with his arms crossed, and could have fancied that there was a dark figure opposite, and sharing the journey. But his philosophy admitted no ghosts. Ghosts, ghosts—what ghosts can there be but projected from me? If he had seen all the Furies—he would have put his fingers on his pulse. In a world that is all shadows, what matter one more or less? Keep thy heart up, oh gentle idealist, whose philosophy lies as softly on thy being as moonlight on the sea!

Presently the lights of a town rose over a curve in the road and flashed in the darkness, artillery-fashion. The chaise stopped at a turnpike, then whirled past quiet little houses with dabs of garden in front, and windows seeming sheets of light (little houses that suggest love in a cottage, and a young wife reading one a new poem by T——); then stopped again. Welwyn got

down, sent his trunk into the inn, and moved away on his business. He gained the centre of the town. A gigantic figure loomed near him. It was an abbey. He was in St. Alban's. Once more our story lingers near St. Alban's pile and Bacon's ashes.

He passed down a lane near the abbey, stopped at a door,—knocked thrice. It was opened by an old woman dressed in black, and holding a candle.

"Mr. Alfred, how you are grown! Come in, sir, the priests are with him."

Welwyn's face darkened. He followed her on tip-toe, and with the soft, reverent step with which we approach a dearly-loved grave. (What a strange *life* there is about such a spot!) In another minute he breathed heavily. The air he respired was that of his father's death-chamber. They had not met for years. They had been separated by temperament, by stern anger, by jealousy, and hate.

The father, a man of sixty, was lying on his back, breathing hard, and with his eyes fixed on the priests. They were by the bedside, and performing that ceremony in which the Church of Rome anoints with holy oil her dying children, to fight, like gladiators, the battle with death! One of them turned to the son, and made a motion to him to kneel. He paused, and obeyed. But he was not one who thought that he approached nearer the great Source of Being by bending his knees.

The ceremony was concluded. The priests withdrew. Welwyn was left alone in the room with his father. The old man took no notice of him; seemed quite unconscious of his presence. His manner was stern and strange; for there ran through his race that dark chain of eccentricity, at one end of which is genius, and at the other—insanity.

"Well, father," said Welwyn, "I am come."

The old man rose suddenly up in the bed. "Speak to me, my boy. Where is Ivy? Does she remember that she must expiate her mother's sin by her own sorrow? Listen to me, for I have not long to live, and already my heart beats slow and sullen, as if 'twere ashamed to go!"

Alfred was moved, and he sat down by the bedside.

"I know that my time is short. There has been a strange odour of violets all day. When I was young, I learnt that that was a sign of death. At least, I mean, when it comes as it has here, and at times like this."

'Ivy is still at Malta," said Alfred, slowly, and avoiding reference to what his father had just said.

"Good, good!" and the old man's eyes brightened. "Convey my wishes to her, and tell her that as her mother lost heaven for the sake of me——"

"What!" cried his son, starting to his feet. The father, by a sudden impulse, pulled the bell-rope which hung by the bedside. The bell rang with a sharp, wailing noise through the house. The elder of the two priests came into the room. Mr. Welwyn had fallen back on his pillow insensible—and insensible he passed away.

* * * * * * * *

And Welwyn was wandering out in the open air of night, meditating on that event which turns the stars into mourners, and every wind of heaven into a dirge.

"When we are, Death is not; and when Death is, we are not." *

A magnificent dilemma, with horns as bright and splendid as the horns of the moon!

CHAPTER III.

Dressed for effect, yet no way proud of dress,
Bestowing alms though unmoved by distress,
Too proud to do no good—that would be mean—
But yet too vain to let that good be seen—
He never looked to heaven except for weather;
His heart and boots were both of patent leather;
An oligarch,—he strictly served the Crown,
Thinking it helped to keep the people down;
And though he left *Religion* in the lurch,
He paid his money to support the Church.
(From a Volume of UNPUBLISHED SATIRES.)

FONTENOY the elder having just returned from his magisterial duties, was seated in his library at Heatherby. He was fatigued. It was the beginning of a severe winter. Poverty and vagrancy were very common. A plentiful game-season had produced very full calendars. In this country, crime fluctuates with the supply of partridges; and when we see it announced that the "birds are strong on the wing" at an early date in the season, we naturally expect full prisons and impoverished peasantry. Mr. Fontenoy and his colleague on the bench (Pierrepoint of Pierrepoint, &c.) had just been committing some hideous and unnatural villains for stealing holly.† The atrocious miscreants had been taking little pieces of that plant to sell to people desirous of adorning their houses with it at Christmas. Toleration has its limits. Such knaves must be sent to jail! Mr. Fontenoy had committed them with his most severe expression—a look that might have

* Tristram Shandy.

† What has become of the "great-hearted gentlemen" of Browning's "Kentish Sir Bing's" school? Echo answers—but only from the grave!

iced wine. Not that he was subject to fits of anger or excitement. He was usually in an equable state of cool temperature. He never knew those marvellous alternations which make of some men, to-day a meteor flying through heaven, to-morrow an ærolite, cold and silent on the earth.

He busied himself just now among his papers. There was a deed of mortgage and the prospectus of a mining company before him, and lying beside them, a letter from his son, which he had indorsed "Singleton's folly," and which he kept with other documents of a very different character. He was a singularly unromantic man, one of those to whom tears suggest nothing but a pocket-handkerchief. His favourite part of Scripture was the "Prodigal Son," which he conceived to have been expressly launched against the young gentlemen of his generation—and in killing the "Fatted Calf," his predominant reflection would have been on the price of veal. In fact, the contrast between himself and Singleton was as striking as that between the allegorical headings given to the chapters of the "Song of Solomon," and the gorgeous, glowing poetry of the song itself! Greater it could not well be.

He had just finished a letter when he heard a hasty step on the stairs; the door opened, and he welcomed Frederick Lepel. Notwithstanding the difference of their political opinions (which in most cases was a matter of importance in Mr. Fontenoy's estimation), they were excellent friends; he looked on Frederick as a sensible fellow, who wished to rise in the world, and who had doubtless very good private reasons for taking the course he did.

"How do you do, Frederick?"

"How are you, sir?" said Frederick, with much *empressement*. "Do I interrupt you?"

"Oh, no. I suppose you are beginning to be pretty full at Dunreddin, now?"

"Yes," said Frederick, shrugging his shoulders a little. "What they call 'old English hospitality.' My father is hinting at a wassail bowl; as if one could not get drunk enough on mulled port!"

Mr. Fontenoy smiled grimly. "By the bye, we had some cases of holly stealing this morning. Curious thing it is, that people should deface shrubs! and for what purpose? A barbarous decoration!"

"Yes," said Frederick; "the only *use* of holly is to make birdlime."

"Are there any fresh arrivals of guests?"

"Yes; and that was what I came over to talk about. We have got a Lieutenant Welwyn of the navy, who knows Single-

ton; he found my father's yacht in the Channel, drifting like a tub (when *I* want to go anywhere, I take a passage in a steamer),—and towed them safe into Plymouth."

"Welwyn!" said Mr. Fontenoy; and he paused, and seemed meditating. "I remember a man of that name, long ago, abroad. Well, time passes?" Lepel looked at him with a half sneer, and turned and carelessly skimmed with his eye the book-cases. He was wondering what reminiscence had called so much human interest into that dry, hard face.

"What sort of man is this Welwyn?" Mr. Fontenoy asked, raising his head from his hand, on which it had been resting for some time.

"Quiet, grave, gentlemanlike, and rather unintelligible," said Frederick, sententiously.

"Oh, a plain old lieutenant."

"Not at all; quite young and good-looking, and talks much more like a pope than a sailor."

"Ah, I must have some conversation with him about Singleton."

Frederick then turned the conversation to business matters, for they were associated together in one or two projects, and after some time they set off for Dunreddin. They found a large company assembled in the drawing-room; dinner waiting for them, old Mr. Lepel fidgety, Mrs. Lepel anxious (she was always anxious when Frederick was late), Augusta pensive, and the company, generally, in various stages of decorous anxiety. Welwyn was dressed in mourning, and looked pale and thoughtful. The difference between him and Frederick, in appearance, was this.—one was the kind of man to sit for a cardinal; the other to stand for a borough.

There was barely time for more than a mere formal introduction of Welwyn to Mr. Fontenoy, when dinner was announced, and the party "formed order of sailing" (as Sir J. Singleton, C.B., used to phrase it), and "tacked in succession" to the dining-room. During dinner, Welwyn glanced once or twice at Mr. Fontenoy, who was at some distance from him. Mr. Fontenoy asked him to take wine, to encourage him! Fontenoy *père* liked a young man who looked shy. I still maintain that shyness usually accompanies mental superiority (by which I do not mean "brains," as people call it, or mere talent),—though Thackeray classes it as a "species of vanity."* Say that the shyness of some is so; at all events, we must still class it with that good-natured vanity which is sensitive about the opinion of others. And how much better is that than the *air capable et*

* In "Pendennis," where we find the good sense of a homily, with the easy charm of a novel.

composé," which, as Rochefoucauld says, usually becomes impertinence.

At dessert, it must be admitted the conversation was dull. There was a gentleman who talked of prison discipline, and whose conversation was a fine specimen of the severest secondary punishments. Frederick's talk, to be sure, was better, for, like a grindstone, he not only ground, but sparkled. Fontenoy *père* uttered observations so gravely, that you were reminded of an oracle utttered by an oak of old. A Scotchman who had come down from grouse-shooting, and who was a native of that remarkable part of Scotland called Galloway, spoke incessantly of "Gall*a*way."

"Mr. Murdock, have you seen Ulswater?"

"Have ye ever seen Gall*a*way?"

"Mr. Murdock, have you seen the new book on Palestine?"

"Palestine—Pawlestine! Eh,—it's no much bigger than Gall*a*way!"

You always felt inclined to hurl a pine-apple at the head of Murdock, if you sat opposite him; and were constantly reminded of that anecdote of Sir Philip Francis, in which we are told that he sprang from his chair once, seized a prosy man by the throat, in the middle of an observation, and exclaimed that "flesh and blood could bear it no longer!"

Welwyn was prodigiously relieved when he found himself in the drawing-room. Near him, on an ottoman, was Ellen Pierrepoint—a little, fair, slim girl, who tripped up to chat with an agreeable person, as prettily as a robin hops up to the window in winter-time for crumbs. She was attracted by Welwyn's reserve and quiet: perhaps agreeing with an old and forgotten writer, who says—

> Not bould in speech, nor man of many words,
> Chuse thou a husband; leafy tree affords
> The smallest store of fruit.*———

Welwyn shut up the book he had been looking at, as she sat down beside him. During the few days he had been at Dunreddin, he had conversed with her several times. She used to talk to him about the sea, and then, by an easy transition—at least one that she found very easy—about Frederick Lepel.

"Now, Mr. Welwyn, tell me something about the 'Flying Dutchman.'"

* From "A Happy Husband," by Patrick Hannay, Gent., M.A., 1618.—He was grandson of Donald Hannay, Esq., of Sorbie, in Wigtownshire, N.B. He wrote Two Elegies on the Death of Queen Ann, wife of James I., besides other "Poems," published in one volume, with a curious portrait, in 1622; and sometimes has much point and command of versification.—See ELLIS's "Specimens;" BURKE's "Visits of Seats and Arms," Vols. II. and III.; &c. &c.

Augusta caught the words, and came over and joined them. She had a great love for the marvellous.

"It is odd," she said, "that the unromantic Dutch should have furnished the best supernatural story to the legends of the ocean."

"Yes," said Welwyn; "I remember, once, when I was coming round the Cape of Good Hope, in the 'Pelican.' It was very stormy weather——"

Augusta bent her eyes with an eager look; Ellen nodded her head with delight, at the prospect of a story, till her ringlets shook again. Presently, a little group formed round them.

"Very stormy weather!" resumed Welwyn. "Fancy a sky deadly black, with great, long clouds of glaring white scudding across it, and a moon rushing like a blood-red cannon-ball! We had been all day labouring in the sea, with very little sail set. Just at sunset, a ship passed close by us; I came to windward to look at her; she had a large black hull, with a white stripe: her masts were a bright brown; she was before the wind, flying at a grand pace——"

Ellen held her breath.

"She passed on. We watched her, breathlessly; her sails did not move; she went out of sight."

"Well?" asked Ellen.

"Well!" said the narrator, with a demure smile.

"Did you see her again?"

"No!"

"What was she, then?" asked Augusta.

"The 'Rampant,' Captain Huggles, going to Bombay, with a general cargo," said Welwyn, looking innocent.

"Oh! For shame!"

"Really, this is trifling with our young affections," said the lively and daring Miss Beaconsfield, who read George Sand.

Frederick Lepel, who had joined the group, laughed. "Very good, Welwyn. Generally, when sailors begin to spin a yarn, nothing short of the shears of Atropos can cut it in a decent time."

"And pray who is Atropos?" inquired Miss Beaconsfield.

"A *femme savante* of the upper circles," said Frederick, moving away. Ellen Pierrepoint went to the piano. Augusta spoke to Welwyn of Singleton; perhaps the father heard the name, for he crossed over to them.

"Pray—stay," said Welwyn, in a sudden low voice, to Miss Lepel. She had been about to move away; she coloured a little, but remained seated.

Mr. Fontenoy came up, and entered into conversation with Welwyn about his son. His questions were of the genuine

conventional class; they chilled Welwyn; Augusta had been chilled by such long before. It is a sad fact that there are only two fates for genuine original beings born into the world of convention, now—rebellion or misery! Who ever met a very gifted person who was not either fanatic, quietist, or quack? But it is only the first two that the world dislikes. *Allons!*

When Mr. Fontenoy had asked various questions, he paused: then he said, "I remember your name very well, Mr. Welwyn. Are you of the Welwyns of ——?" (naming a county.)

"I never troubled myself much about our origin," said Welwyn. "I was too careless, and too poor."

Mr. Fontenoy winced at the word "poor." For the life of him, he could not help shuddering at that word.

"I used to know a gentleman of your name," he went on, "long ago; I was abroad then——"

"I don't think the name is uncommon," interrupted Welwyn And the music growing loud at that moment, Mr. Fontenoy said, hastily, that he hoped to see more of Mr. Welwyn during his stay in this part of the country, and left them.

"I don't like that man," said Welwyn, suddenly.

Augusta was surprised, but she said simply, "Some people do not."

"Pardon me," he observed, recovering himself. "I talk in my sleep sometimes. My life is a melancholy dream."

The music ceased. Ellen Pierrepoint came over to Augusta, with her winning way, and said, "Oh, pray sing us 'The Martyr.'"

"The Martyr?" said Frederick. "What is that?"

"You will be expected to cry," said Miss Beaconsfield, in a comic whisper.

Augusta hesitated. One or two of the party pressed Ellen's request.

"May I beg it as a favour," said Welwyn.

Miss Lepel walked to the piano at once, and sat down; and Welwyn felt a sudden thrill of pleasure—so sweet, and so new!

Then Augusta sang the following strange, irregular strain—quaint and sad, as a rude death's-head and cross-bones on a country tomb. The attraction lay in the music to which it was set—a flowing, wild, melancholy melody, impossible to describe.

THE MARTYR.

It was the early morning
When first she met my view;
What time with heavy rain-drops
Sparkled the spear-like yew:
It was the fall of summer
When she used to pass by me;
What time the year was weaning
The fruit from the mother tree.

Ever, in early morning,
Glided she forth alone;
Cold and silent she seemed
As a lily carved in stone:
Ever, in early morning,
Forth the maiden goes,
With water, cold as her glances,
To water a lonely rose.

Drooping and dying the rose seem'd—
Forth the maiden goes—
Paler and paler her cheek grew,
Redder and redder the rose!
It was the early morning—
The rose had gained its prime—
A voice, like the voice of the maiden,
Was heard in the village chime.

Still, from the early morning,
Went on a heavy work;
Deeply the green earth was wounded,
In the shadow of the kirk.
Then there was no more morning—
Oh! then my grief was strong—
The rose decked the grave of the maiden,
Who had nourished it so long.

There was a murmur as she ceased, and Augusta coughed and lowered her head for a moment, and her white handkerchief gleamed as it crossed her long black hair. Mr. Fontenoy had, strange to say, been listening with attention, and seemed to take more interest in it than he did in music generally. (Though, to be sure, he had subscribed for a new organ for the Rev. Mr. Rutter's church lately!)

"Do you know where we got that music, Mr. Fontenoy?" asked Ellen Pierrepoint, timidly.

"No."

"On that day when we were all over at Heatherby, and you gave us leave to turn over those old portfolios of music. It was tied up in a romantic way, and there was a lock of hair inside."

Mr. Fontenoy turned pale. At that moment he met Welwyn's eye, and apparently something in its expression discomposed him, for he turned away, changed the conversation abruptly, with a little rusty laugh, and soon afterwards ordered his carriage, and went home. The Pierrepoints went also soon afterwards; and it became evident that it was time for everybody to retire, for Murdock had fallen sound asleep on a sofa, and was snoring like an apoplectic Stentor.

Welwyn gained his room, and sinking into a chair, began to muse. "No, it is madness—folly grown insane! It is impertinence. If she loves me—why, then, that only makes it worse! I hope she does not—I hope to God she does not. Pshaw! Shall I, who am a sharer in the Great Soul—

'. . . owner of the sphere
Of the seven stars and the solar year.'

become the slave of an idea—a formalist—a fanatic? I have not broken every idol only to make room for one."

Meanwhile, Frederick Lepel in his rooms read a line written on half a sheet of scented note-paper. It was this—

"Dear Fritz,—I think—yes.

"E."

Frederick lighted his meerschaum with it, stirred the fire, took from it a little copper pan, in which some claret was gently simmering, and left the room, treading lightly along the gallery.

Welwyn heard a slight tapping at his door,—started and coloured,—then smiled at his folly, and opened it. He saw Frederick in a rich dressing-gown, and with a black velvet cap on.

"I thought you would not have gone to bed. Just step over to my rooms, and have a chat. I can't sleep yet."

Welwyn readily assented. They sat down in Frederick's sitting-room. Frederick wound up his alarum, which was to summon him to his reading early, and composing himself in a huge arm-chair, seemed in the exact mood for gossip. But, in truth, the active brain under his pale well-developed forehead was busily at work.

They chatted away pleasantly enough—talked of the various people in the house, and the neighbouring country. Fred was gay and amusing.

Presently he leaned forward to knock the ashes out of his pipe, and said, "I expect another visitor soon—one of the 'sordid and rapacious oligarchy,' as some of my Radical friends call them; but in reality a pleasant, gentlemanly fellow—(here Fred laughed agreeably)—with everything about him that said Radicals think creditable in themselves, and blood that every man of good descent must sympathise with into the bargain—Lord Belden. (Here Fred rose, and touched Welwyn's shoulder.) I know you would soon guess the state of things, so I tell you beforehand He is what people call 'in love' with Augusta—an old engagement. Hang it, I thought I had put too much nutmeg in What a bore!"

CHAPTER IV.

Leave all for love;—
Yet hear me, yet,
One word more thy heart behoved,
One pulse more of firm endeavour,
Keep thee, to-day,
To-morrow, for ever,
Free as an Arab
Of thy beloved.

EMERSON.

My faculties gather to her beauty, like the genii to the glister of the lamp.
"Shirley," by CURRER BELL, Vol. III. 149-50.

WELWYN descended very late to breakfast next morning. He had scarcely sat down when Miss Lepel entered the room. Mr. Murdock was finishing a grouse. "Eh, Muster Welwyn, you're late this morning! And ye, too, Miss Lepel!" (Murdock had a notion that his *forte* was comedy.)

"I slept ill, and was restless," said Welwyn.

Augusta had slept ill, and had been restless. Welwyn saw as much—if not from her delicate pallor, and the touching languor of her eyes, for which the long black lashes seemed too heavy—then, certainly, from the blush which passed across her features as he spoke, like the reflection of a kingfisher's breast in a running stream.

"I heard from Gawloway this morning," said Murdock, chipping an egg, as you could fancy an ibis chipping a crocodile's. "Mr. Welwyn, have ye been in the West Indies?"

"For a short time."

"Ye'll know something of guano, then!"

Murdock carried him off to the library, to ask him the important question at greater leisure. Even this monstrous bore was a relief to Welwyn in his present frame of mind. Mr. Murdock pelted him with guano for an hour, then strolled off to take a walk, and examine any vagrants that he might meet on the roads as to the causes of their being out of employment; having accomplished which, he used to give the victim a penny, and advise him to read Adam Smith. He then sauntered on through the lanes, calculating the pecuniary value of any *exuviæ* lying on the road; and so passed the day in rational and honest pursuits, and thanked Heaven that he was not a dreamer, but a practical man.

When Murdock had gone out, Welwyn deliberated what he should do. There was the library, but he had not courage to

read. The weather was too cold for sauntering to anybody but the hardy Murdock. In this hesitation he was wandering about the library, reading the names of books which he was too languid to take down, when Mr. Lepel came in. He was laudably anxious to see that his guest was amused, and Welwyn was equally anxious to appear perfectly happy.

Mr. Lepel began hunting about for an attractive volume for him as eagerly as if he had been a bookseller going to dispose of it. His own literary tastes—as far as he had literary tastes—were of a good old traditionary character. He liked Shakspeare, but did not care to trouble himself with Coleridge and Hazlitt's criticisms on him—much less with all those wonderful speculations with which the world has been flooded of late, wherein Caliban is proved to be a Brummell, and Iago an injured individual—with much of the same class. He honoured Milton, yet somehow did not often read anything but Comus. Among moderns, Burke was a favourite, Sir Walter Scott a darling. He had only ventured on one of Sir Edward's novels, and he timidly objected to one or two of Tennyson's poems, as some old people do.

"Let me see—what have we here?" he said, taking out a volume. "Jones on Constitutional Law. Hem! An elaborate treatise!"

Welwyn smiled as he saw that the leaves were uncut. Jones was replaced.

"As a naval man, perhaps you would like a naval novel." He took down "Tom Cringle's Log"—the best fiction of that species that was ever written. Welwyn had read it.

"Really," said Welwyn, laughing, "you are giving yourself too much trouble, and encouraging me in lazy habits."

"I tell you what," said Mr. Lepel, "I wish you would go and visit Mr. Fontenoy at Heatherby. Some of the young ladies have been intending to go for some time."

"I don't like the man, but I must see him some time. I need not stay long, and there will be others with me," *thought* Welwyn, in an instant. So he said that he was ready to go. He was going to say *happy*, though he invariably endeavoured to check all tendencies to conventional talk as well as he could. But, as times go, one might as well speak Sanscrit, as speak honestly for general purposes.

Mr. Lepel went out. Welwyn remained alone in the library. He took up some paper, and fell to sketching heads with a pen. He drew well—a common accomplishment in the service.

Presently Augusta and Ellen Pierrepoint came in, looking for their negligent cavalier. Welwyn jumped up, and threw down the pen.

"I ought to have been ready, but pray excuse me for a moment." He left the room to make some slight change in his dress. When he returned, they went out. They had agreed to walk, as the distance was trifling. The air was milder, and the sun made the snow which rested in light flakes on the tips of the trees and shrubs, sparkle there like blossoms. They all three walked easily along, and without taking arms. That custom is a bore. It prevents you seeing the face of the person you are walking with, unless you markedly turn your head to meet their eyes—which is sometimes awkward. I frankly confess, that I hate to see a troup of couples, chained together like galley-slaves, or—to use a more pleasing illustration—tied together in a bouquet.

"I love winter scenery," said Welwyn,—"I like what somebody calls,—

'The frolic architecture of the snow.'"*

Here they gained the summit of a rather steep lane.

"That is Heatherby," said Miss Lepel, pointing to Mr. Fontenoy's seat. Soon afterwards they stepped into the park. There were many acres of grand, smooth sward, dotted here and there with noble trees. On one side of the house rose a slight hill covered with a thick plantation. The estate was very well wooded—though, just at this time, execution had been done to a considerable extent, and trees, peeled white, and with the bark piled in square black loads beside them (like bathers with their clothes), were lying stretched in pale death. These were phenomena on which our party did not speculate.

"It is a beautiful place," said Welwyn, pausing. He thought of Singleton, and mentally congratulated him on the heritage; but as for envy, it never entered his mind.

As they approached the house, its beauty grew more grand, more definite and imposing. It was intellectually as well as architecturally Elizabethan. Its deep red hue shone in the sun like petrified fruit. There was a certain pride even in the attitude of the "three roebuck's heads *couped*," which figured on the escutcheon in front. They seemed ready to show fight—like their master—and appeared to exclaim, "Look at us, we are preserved!" The building was eloquent and conscious, and said, "Behold, oh visitor! I am an aristocrat. If my possessors are not titularly noble, 'tis that they were too proud to seek a superfluous honour!"

Mr. Fontenoy was out, but was going to return soon. So they walked in to wait for him, and strove to amuse themselves

* The quotation is an anachronism, I am afraid, in Welwyn's mouth; but I would risk a worse fault to introduce a line of Emerson's!

in the interval. Not that that was easy in Mr. Fontenoy's mansion, wherein a solemn grandeur as of a cathedral reigned ever—where a canary in a cage was afraid to sing—where the shy and the tremulous sipped the wine at lunch with an awful reverence. Indeed, everything there became the master, who—as Camille Desmoulins wittily said of St. Just—carried his head as if it were the Host!

"That vase came from Pompeii," said Augusta, pointing to one.

"It has only changed its tomb," said Ellen Pierrepoint, who occasionally shot a silver arrow at Mr. Fontenoy, of whom she stood in some dread.

"I have often wondered," said Augusta, lowering her voice, "what kind of lady Mrs. Fontenoy was; I believe she died young."

A slight cold calm fell upon the three. Welwyn rose from his chair, and began pacing the large drawing-room in which they were sitting—crossing the streams of light and shadow that poured from the lofty window.

"Singleton is not at all like his father in the face," he said, musingly.

"I dare say he resembles *her*," said Miss Lepel. "I can fancy a girl like Singleton."

Welwyn halted, and looked out of the window. The light fell on his profile.

"I see a slight resemblance to Singleton in Mr. Welwyn," said Miss Pierrepoint. Welwyn moved rather abruptly, and smiled.

"Yes, I can fancy a girl like Singleton," said Augusta again, musingly.

Welwyn again stopped, and looked at them.

"Can you fancy a girl with a face something between an Italian summer and a northern sky, with hair in ebony blossoms, and eyes like violets in love?"

"Yes," said both the girls, smiling a little; "and what then?"

"Can you fancy her shuddering at the prospect of a cloister?"

"Oh, yes!" cried the Pierrepoint, making her ringlets dance.

"And having escaped that,—finding the worse cloister of a cold heart for shelter? Finally, love having changed into sorrow, and religion darkened into superstition, can you fancy, then, her wearing away, and, in a word, dying a martyr to an aspiration?"

"Like the martyr in the song we found here," said Miss Pierrepoint.

"Yes," said Welwyn, slowly—"yes—very like the martyr in the song. True!"

His manner was so strange, that they turned rather pale, and

looked at each other. But the shade passed away from his high pale brow, and he smiled again, and began more lightly.

"Well, this was a fancy of mine.—How strange that Mr. Fontenoy does not come!"

"Let us look at the pictures—let us look at the ancient Fontenoys," said Miss Pierrepoint.

It was agreed. They gained the gallery; there were the gentlemen. They wandered about criticising them: sometimes Augusta praised one—so that Welwyn wondered it did not suddenly take life, and walk down with delight. One section of the Mahometans hold the odd belief that all artists will, at the Judgment-day, be called on to furnish souls for their figures. Happy creed! Oh, shade of Phidias, the figures in the works of some of our English gentlemen want souls most terribly!—But this is a mere passing shot, to put the "light" reader into good-humour!

"Mr. Fontenoy is like that gentleman," said Welwyn, indicating the great-grandfather.

"Except, unhappily, in one thing—he speaks!" said Miss Pierrepoint.

As they left the gallery, Augusta lingering behind day-dreamily, the old housekeeper—ladylike, stately Mrs. Campbell, of whom we had a peep before—came up to her, with a solemn whisper—

"Dear me, Miss Lepel, what is that gentleman's name?"

"Mr. Welwyn, a naval officer," said Augusta, colouring.

"Well, Miss Lepel," said the housekeeper, solemnly, "he reminds me in his face—he's really very like, it's the oddest thing possible—of Mr. Fontenoy's lady. But I dare not speak of it."

Mrs. Campbell moved away, and Augusta followed Welwyn and Ellen. They were in the drawing-room together; and, as they did not care much for each other, talking in a lively and intimate strain. Ellen asked him if he believed in love at first sight, to which he answered "Yes; and in no other!" And afterwards Ellen repeated the phrase to Augusta, who thought of making a note of it, but found it unnecessary—she remembered it so well!

At last Mr. Fontenoy arrived. He had been very busy; he had been over to Huskdale. He ordered lunch; he received Welwyn very hospitably. The four sat down; the repast consisted of what my Lady Wortley Montague loved—chickens and champagne.

"I am sorry you had to wait," said Mr. Fontenoy, gravely, for the third time.

"Oh!" said Miss Pierrepoint, in her usual lively style, "we

amused ourselves very well: Mr. Welwyn has a dramatic talent." Mr. Fontenoy bowed his acquiescence, pleasantly.

"And," continued Ellen, gaily, and never noticing that Welwyn was looking dark, and actually somewhat alarmed—"he interested us by drawing a picture of a girl escaping a cloister—marrying a lover—and, finally—ah! a melancholy fancy—pining away!"

Welwyn blushed scarlet; Augusta seemed terrified; Mr. Fontenoy paused, apparently shocked, with his glass in his hand—then raised it. His lips were pale, and rigidly quivering as they were touched by the wine. It is a terrible sight to see a cold, worldly man stung or shocked: the more firmly the tree is rooted in *earth*, the more startling is the crash when the lightning from heaven *does* come!

Ellen looked up in surprise at the sensation her careless words had made.

Mr. Fontenoy recovered himself, and said some commonplace thing, but his glance rested for an instant on Welwyn, with a dark and sinister expression,—then he poured out some more wine, and so the lunch passed off—everybody disturbed—everybody trying to be easy—and everybody conscious of the failure.

Mr. Fontenoy rose.

"Mr. Welwyn," he said, "let me show you my library. These young ladies have been often there,—they will excuse us."

Welwyn bowed, and strode after the speaker with a step as proud as his own. As they entered the room, Mr. Fontenoy shut the door, and locked it,—they were left alone with the solemn, quiet books, and the sublime and sallow face of the churchman by Velasquez, who lorded it over the chamber.

"Mr. Welwyn," said Mr. Fontenoy, "I perceive that you *are* of the Welwyns of——"

"If you know them, you know how, alone, they may be addressed!" said Welwyn, with lofty quiet.

"I know my duties as a gentleman," said Mr. Fontenoy, with cold pride. "Well, sir, have you come here to betray my early follies to—everybody—to the world?" He stammered, and was moved. "I know your father hates me;—I know all,—everything, sir,—I defy him!"

"He is dead," said Welwyn, tranquilly; "these words are idle as the wind that sweeps his grave. But come, Mr. Fontenoy," he continued, availing himself of his companion's mute surprise to seize his attention; "come, listen to reason, listen to something better,—feeling. Man should not, like the tree, get hollow at the heart, as he gets hoary at the head!—As to what you have just said, I am no babbler,—what that young girl spoke of, was only told as an idle fancy, without weight or name.

I will suppress no truth, but I will indulge no gossip. Yet, after all, Mr. Fontonoy, why a mystery? *I*, sir," said Welwyn, proudly, "am not ashamed of the blood with which you mingled your own—which I share with your son. *He*, I doubt not——"

"Enough, sir," said Mr. Fontenoy, now recovering himself quite, and subsiding into his old shell; "I thank you. Our opinions differ; but, Mr. Welwyn, we will have silence and friendship. How stiff the lock of the door is!"

They went out, and Mr. Fontenoy's soul ran back again—like a startled rabbit into its burrow.

The girls were in the drawing-room; Mr. Fontenoy smiled as he joined them, and said to Welwyn:—"A good library, is it not?" But Welwyn never stooped to conventional trickery, so he merely made a bow, and did not disguise, in his manner, that the interview had been of a serious character.

It happened that Mr. Fontenoy was that day engaged to dine with the Lepels. It was drawing near the time for departure, and it was agreed that the four should go together,—then it was agreed they should walk,—then Miss Pierrepoint manœuvred to walk with Welwyn (not that she liked him—'twas part of an undercurrent of plot—yet she did not dislike him either), but that was defeated,—then she dropped behind, that Welwyn and Augusta might walk first, in sight of her,—strange to say, that, too, was not accomplished,—finally the two couples set off.

Welwyn, log. I hope, Miss Lepel, you were not much agitated by the awkward scene at lunch?

Augusta. I was, somewhat.

Welwyn (hesitating). It was embarrassing. Do you understand it, Miss Lepel?

Augusta. I could see that the words awoke a painful reminiscence; indeed, I fancy [*hesitates*] that they embodied a part of Mr. Fontenoy's own history.

Welwyn. It is like your——[*stops short*], I should say—you are quite right,—such *is* the case; I happen to know the story. In fact—but I may be frank with you?

Aagusta. (turning her eyes fearlessly upon him). I hope so, indeed, Mr. Weiwyn; we ought all to be frank!

Welwyn. Thank you; plainly then, he did marry a lady in the way described, and whose fate [*his voice lowers*] was as described. *My father married her elder sister,*—but, perhaps, it should not be told to everybody.

Augusta (much surprised). I will keep it secret.

They walked on together. Their two friends were considerably in advance,—and Welwyn mused and wavered,—should he try and divine whether the girl by his side was fancy-free or not, and, having found out, take a decided course one way

or another? On one side, was acceptance,—on the other, going back to the navy, might not the fate of Icarus befall him, and he, in soaring too boldly towards heaven, fall into *the Sea!* The whole speculation was intoxicating. She knew his thoughts, and she honoured his fears,—and silent, seemingly formal as they were, they marched on together—like Æneas and his friend—wrapped in a haze, woven by the Queen of Love!

When they reached Dunreddin, they found Frederick in great good spirits, Lord Belden having arrived, and with him the news of the dangerous illness of one of the sitting members for Huskdale. Frederick had been playing up to that seat for years. He was young, clever, of good family, good expectations, and well backed. Now was the time! By using Augusta to attract my Lord Belden, by playing Welwyn against him, by courting Mr. Fontenoy, and availing himself of Ellen Pierrepoint as a diplomatist generally, wonders might be accomplished!

Indeed, Frederick was now about to keep all these human objects in play around him, like balls spun by a juggler, for praise and profit of his own. Meanwhile, he amused everybody in everybody's favourite way. And thus this Alcibiades of the Manchester school cut off his dog's tail, to tickle and beguile the good Athenians of the county of Rockshire.

CHAPTER V.

I was a child, and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love,
I and my Annabel Lee.

EDGAR A. POE.

IVY TO HER BROTHER ALFRED WELWYN.

"Malta.

"IT has happened as you feared, my brother. We have met! know not how he found me. I was strolling in the garden, in the hour before sunset, just when the breeze, fresh from the sea, makes the air cool, when he passed in at the gate. I like his manner. He moves with the look of one who has a right to be in the world. I scarcely know what made me blush and start as he entered. And I blushed more when I reflected that he perceived it. Yet, why? It cannot be that I love him. I love the Holy Mother—I love my holy patron saint. And it never makes me blush to see *their* image, or to kneel at *their* shrine! This is wrong, this confusion. I have imposed on myself penance

and vigil. I will expiate the pleasure which his society gives me. Well, I do so! Yet the penance does not wound, as penance did before; and the vigil! ah, it is superfluous! The thought of him keeps me awake and restless, as the ruffled rose-leaf disturbed the Sybarite's sleep.

"You will not blame me, Alfred, that I write freely to you. I know not whether these feelings are wrong; but if so, whence do they come? Can the Great Power, which we all dread, stoop to torture a being like me? Sometimes a terrible idea haunts me: is it that I am given over to the Evil One? Does he tempt me thus? Or, can an evil being come in such a sweet shape? It is a heavy mystery! Can it indeed be wrong to feel for a gentle-hearted friend something of the affection which we are all taught to feel for God—which our nature makes us feel for flower and star?

"It seems to me, my brother, that I have discovered my sin! I am too happy! I have no right to love so intensely that blue heaven which I have done nothing to earn. I have no right, when I loll under the orange-tree, and watch the first swarm of fireflies gathering in the myrtle-bush, to doubt that labour and watching here are necessary to avoid eternal pain. I am the vilest of heretics! When *he* whispers to me, my heart beats, as it never beats at the music of the choir, or the tones of the priest. O, my brother, write to me; dispel my doubts as to right and wrong; blame me, if you please, but send me a law.

"You know my education. You know how rigidly I have obeyed all. From my youth in the green valleys where our father now rests, I was taught by the ministers of our creed that expiation was due by *me* for the faults of our mother's race. My mother—her sister—offended heaven, and broke laws. What was the result? You know our father's treatment of the heart of her who abandoned all she had been vowed to for him! You know her sister's fortune—how they repented bitterly—how they died young. Well, I early resolved to atone for their failing, and to shun their fate. And, behold! the veil that I have been looking forward to as a bridal garment now looms on me a pall!

"I feel weary and irresolute. The grand, gorgeous roof of the church now seems crushing me with its weight. The incense is sickly and heavy. How different all from the fresh green of the garden and the pure perfume of the flowers! The father to whom I confess perceives the change that has come over my spirit. He presses me—he grieves me. I am shocked, for it seems a profanation. I am miserable, for I fear that my thoughts are sinful. When I sprinkle myself with water, the cross seems burning on my brow!

"I am sure I have struggled to do right. I have spent my

youth in solitude, or among the devout. I have avoided the follies of girlhood. On the bare walls of my chamber no mirror has hung. When I looked accidentally into a fountain, and, blushing, began to adorn my hair, I turned away suddenly, and reflected I was doing wrong.

"I have poured out all my strange wandering thoughts before you, Alfred. Tell me what I am to do. I swear that I adhere to the old faith; I practise all its rites. Surely that I am happy when I am with my cousin, is not a sin! Is my heart a sin? I will pray to the Holy Mother—Rose of Sharon—and Ark of the Covenant—and she will send me grace! I will cast the false idol from my heart——— * * * I break off suddenly, Alfred—for he is here!"

Slowly rose Welwyn from his seat, as he finished this letter. It fell from his hand, and fluttered to the floor.

It was the morning after the visit at Mr. Fontenoy's; he was alone in the library, where he had retired to read it. He recovered himself—picked it up again—and walked to the window, that the sight of the landscape might compose his mind. Then he set himself to a calm reflection on the state of circumstances. He was embarrassed at every turn of his thoughts; difficulty here—difficulty there—confusion and sorrow over all! He felt a hand on his shoulder, and started; it was Frederick Lepel.

CHAPTER VI.

My son, my lord—a youth of parts,
Who longs to be a small place-holder!
MOORE. "The Fudge Family in Paris.

"You look gloomy, Welwyn!" said Frederick. "One would fancy you were in love!"

"If I were," said Welwyn, "what then?"

Frederick shrugged his shoulders, and smiled. "Well—I don't know. I suppose you would go down on your knees, and pour out—your expectations!"

Welwyn gave a melancholy laugh.

"I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year."

"A brilliant property, but the rents are badly paid," said the worldling. "But let us come out, and amuse ourselves. For myself, I am just in the humour for killing mandarins!"

"Killing mandarins!"

"Yes. Havn't you read Balzac the Inimitable? He starts

the question whether if one could kill a mandarin in China, and gain a large sum of francs by moving the little finger—one would do it. Mind you, without any annoyance, or anything of that sort—only the certainty that you had done it. I frankly confess that—to use an Americanism—I am a whale at mandarins!"

"It's a very philosophical idea, and aptly hits our epoch," said Welwyn. "Would you really kill the mandarin?"

"Why—would not you?" asked Frederick with surprise.

"I don't know. I think not."

"We all do it," said Frederick, "and for much less than Balzac's amount. Parliament does it. Everybody does it."

They went out. A phaeton was waiting at the door; they drove off in it to Huskdale. As they were driving along, Frederick talked of his prospects. There was every chance of a vacancy in the borough soon, and he was preparing an address.

"I made my *début* in that building as a politician," he said, jerking the whip in the direction of the hall, where that great meeting was held which my hero attended. Its doors were now covered with placards, announcing a series of lectures. Frederick pulled up, to take a glance at them: it looked liberal. And Frederick subscribed to the Huskdale Ethnogymnasium—the Mechanics' Institute—and all the other institutions for the benefit of the people which Huskdale afforded. The syllabus, as it was called, which they were now inspecting, announced that Mr. Thomas Snoggles would deliver the following lectures—

Monday—On Ancient Etruria.
Tuesday—The Habits of Bees.
Wednesday—The Phœnician language.
Thursday—The Law of Nations.
Friday—Early Spanish Literature.
Saturday—The Metaphysics of Logic.

While Sunday evening had, with wonderful appropriateness, been selected as the time for a discourse on miracles, not as they appeared to St. Paul, but as they appeared to Mr. Snoggles!

"Snoggles must be a man of erudition," said Welwyn, drily.

Frederick drove on rapidly, and began to laugh.

"My dear sir, reform is like the Thames: it is a great river, but partly fed by sewers."

"Whig above Richmond, eh?"

"Humph," said Frederick; "you flatter the Whigs."

On rattled the greys. The two young men saw the portly figure of the Rev. Mr. Rutter coming down on one side of the pavement; his legs, encased in gaiters of sombre black, were so small in proportion to his body, that he always looked like one of the staves held by a mute. This Frederick had just observed

to Welwyn, when the phaeton turned a corner, and entered Mammon Street. They instantly perceived the figure of a little active man waiting at the corner. Frederick pulled up: they got down; left the phaeton in charge of the servant who had been sitting behind, and joined the stranger.

"How are you, Bibb?" said Frederick.

"Good morning?"

Bibb took snuff, and began to talk, keeping his fingers inside the lid. He was a strange little man, dressed in black; he had square-shaped tight features, with blue eyes, that never rested for a moment; and had a curious trick of constantly looking, first on one side, and then on the other, as if he expected to see a friend or a bailiff. Frederick used to call him "the man with the brazen mask." There was a mystery about him. One acquaintance thought him a person of family; the other, a returned convict. It was impossible to decide who he was. If you knew for certain that he was living in St. Giles's in the morning, you would probably see him in the middle of the day talking to a county member.

"Well, Mr. Bibb, how do matters look?"

"Very well. I have been all the morning spreading a rumour——"

Welwyn looked surprised. Frederick saw it; so he checked the speaker, carelessly.

"Diffusing intelligence, eh?"

"Yes, I am a man of business. You see, Mr. Lepel, that at a crisis like this, when the minds of the people have once been attracted to a public matter, the attention must be kept awake by a perpetual series of new touches."

Frederick nodded.

"I remember," said Bibb, taking snuff, "that when Jolby stood for ——— he and two other fellows kept me for an hour, trying to persuade me to go down and oppose Peel at Tamworth, once——"

Welwyn opened his eyes: he now guessed that Mr. Bibb was an electioneering agent; so he was, *pro tem.*

"For two mortal hours at the Reform Club, sir, they kept bullying me to go down. Perhaps I was wrong not to go: after all, there was nothing to do, but answer Peel!"

Frederick coughed slightly. Mr. Bibb continued—

"As your friend here has very reasonably observed——"

"I beg pardon," said Welwyn, with mild surprise. "But I am not aware that I observed anything."

"Oh, I beg pardon," said Bibb, rather taken aback; "I thought you did"—(the truth is, from all appearances Mr. Bibb had that morning been "lunching with an eminent distiller,"

which was his phrase for refreshing himself at the Green Man). "But to resume. When Jolby stood for ——, I got him in—cost him only £850. *I was known in the county,*" added Bibb, impressively.

And here he entered into a long harangue, in oratorical phraseology, and concluded by pulling out a dirty "Parliamentary Companion." He ran through some thirty or forty names, smudging the page with his thumb. "I know *him*—know *him*—know *him*." And then he pulled out a letter beginning "My dear Bibb," from a very well-known member, and ended by a rapid glance at the present state of the borough of Huskdale. He talked of Church, and Reform, and Education, as people do of the articles in a market; and discussed principles as men talk over the odds. Finally, he had an appointment on business, and he hurried away.

Lepel and Welwyn moved on. Frederick repented that he had brought Welwyn with him.

"A queer fellow, Mr. Bibb—is he not?" he asked.

"Yes," said Welwyn, "an odd-looking fellow, too."

"Indifferent to externals—a philosopher, sir," said Frederick, compassionately.

"Quite natural that the lowest of all trades should be carried on in the lowest of all manners," said Welwyn, quoting Macaulay.

Frederick looked at him with some surprise; but there was no expression of sarcasm in his face. Welwyn hated and despised nothing. He looked from a calm height at all evil, or if he had to come near it, simply moved out of its way. He was optimist, without fanaticism, quietest without indifference.

They walked on, each engaged in his own reflections. Suddenly Frederick pulled Welwyn by the arm. They halted abruptly. They were just opposite the office of one of the county papers. It was Saturday. The lamps were glimmering through the window from the inside; and outside, on a large sheet of paper in huge letters, still wet as streams of rain, were these words.

"By Express,"

"Death of Mr. Prosser, M.P."

"Come in," said Frederick, quickly; they entered together. "Give me a copy of the paper." His fingers trembled as he pulled out his purse to pay for it, so that he could scarcely undo the knot. As they went out again, the wind blew the damp sheet all over him. "Tush, pshaw?" He doubled it up, violently, and read the passage he wanted. Welwyn stood by, and gazed calmly on his heightened colour and elated eye.

"Come on, Welwyn, home."

They walked quickly to the phaeton which was waiting at the 'George." The greys sprang forward, and off they rolled to Dunreddin. "Wrap yourself, my boy," said Frederick, pulling the apron over Welwyn, "it's devilish cold!" His heart was overflowing with good-nature from the sudden good news. The borough was vacant at last. But Welwyn, in his brooding, thoughtful way, kept wondering at the death—which Frederick looked on as such a mere stroke of fortune—wondering what sort of man Prosser had been—and dreamily speculating where and how his cold figure was lying, at that instant. Some men get morbid from the habit of eternal speculation. I do not envy the insight that glances down to the bottom of a churchyard, and sees rottenness and worms, where I see graceful hillocks and fresh grass!

"Well, what news?" asked Lord Belden, rising from the sofa in the drawing-room, and stroking his moustache as they entered. He was a short compact man, with black whiskers and pale forehead, with very small hands and feet, neat, good-natured, and gentlemanly, as unlike an Oligarch (which seems, somehow, to be the ogre of political nursery tales, now-a-days) as possible!

"Prosser est mort," said Frederick. "My address will be out on Monday. Beer must flow; the British lion is roused, and I will put my head in his mouth."

There was a general laugh. Dinner was announced. It was a very lively meal that day.

"What do you say to the repeal of the corn laws?" asked Lord Belden.

"Things are not ripe for that yet," said Frederick.

"Things not being *ripe*, means, with the Radicals, that there is nothing for them to pluck," said his lordship.

"You are severe."

"What, you don't call yourself a Radical, do you?"

"Not in the offensive sense of the word," said Frederick, cautiously. "I am an enlightened-movement man. And as I only want, that what is best for all parties to be removed should be removed, I may be said to be a Conservative."

Welwyn happened to be looking towards Augusta at that moment. She smiled. The graceful Murdock bawled out, "A'm afraid that's Jesuitical," to Frederick. Murdock liked downright men; and as he was sternly opposed to free trade, he was at this time a supporter of Sir Robert.

Somebody having mentioned Mr. Fontenoy shortly after this, Mr. Lepel said that he had been having bad news of Singleton, from Malta.

"I wonder what he means by bad news of Singleton," said Augusta. "I hear something like that of him every other mail."

"I believe he has been forming a foolish attachment, my dear," said her father.

Augusta was silenced. Frederick glanced at Belden. Then he said across the table to Welwyn—

"What do you say to that, Welwyn? You know him."

"I?" said Welwyn, "I think it extremely probable." Looking up, he saw that Augusta's eyes were turned away, but he saw also—or fancied—that she was colouring slightly.

"The question arises, what is a foolish attachment?" said a young Beaconsfield, of a legal turn. Nobody seemed to know.

"Do you know, Miss Pierrepoint?" said that forward youth, to Ellen.

"Yes; it is an attachment to a person who does not care for you," said Ellen, half in jest and half in earnest, and with her April smile,—"April, with her white hands wet with flowers," to use Leigh Hunt's lovely line.

"Very good, my dear Miss Pierrepoint," said Mr. Lepel, paternally. Frederick adjusted his collar; Lord Belden looked sentimental, and wiped his moustache with his fragrant cambric.

When the ladies rose to depart, Frederick opened the door. It chanced, that an observation created some lively dialogue at his father's end of the table. The hum having passed, Frederick was missed.

"Where is Frederick?" asked Mr. Lepel.

Lord Belden raised the gold eyeglass which usually reposed on his breast. "Don't see him."

"Hem! Fred has a chance *now*, has he not?" asked his father, looking eagerly and elated at the gentlemen present.

"Oh, certainly,—no doubt,—youth of talents,"—went round the table in a murmur of approbation. The old man passed his fingers through his sunny white hair.

"He shall have all the support of our family," said Lord Belden.

And indeed that was cheering. His father, the Earl of Clangour, was one of the magnates of the county; he had a castle as large as a village, with a conservatory worthy of Montezuma, an aviary like an American forest,—everything, in short, that could minister to luxury or gratify pride. The earl himself, who had been shattered by a terrible stroke of paralysis, never quitted his own room. Lord Belden was the eldest and only son; the

of everything except his own will, he was—for he was one of the most indecisive of mankind.

Where was Frederick? When the ladies went to the drawing-room, he stole up to his own apartments; he arranged the papers on the spacious table, stirred the fire, and lighted a large lamp; then he began pacing the room, and every now and then paused to listen at the half-opened door. A pause,—then a step was heard, light as the rustle of a leaf; another,—and Ellen Pierrepoint entered!

"Hush!" said Ellen, as she came up to the fire; "I can only stay a moment. Oh, Fred, I am so glad that you have good news!"

"Well, but about what we were speaking of! Time is short!"

A shadow came over the girl's face. Self, self,—she could not help seeing Frederick's selfishness.

"My own Ellen," said Frederick, coaxingly. He touched her fingers, and held them in his own—as if they were dice!

"Mark me," said Ellen;—"Augusta loves Welwyn; I know it,—I feel sure of it."

"Hah!" Frederick coloured, and leant his arm on the carved mantel-piece.

"I ought to know the signs," said Ellen, drooping her eyes; but the touching phrase did not move him.

"Well," said Frederick, drawing himself up to his full length; "*Nous verrons;* you see, Ellen, I am ambitious."

"I like you for it," said the girl, proudly.

"And we will see whether—but no matter. Thank you very much Ellen; and I am afraid I must return to these worthies, and their claret."

"Why, Fred, what a long time you have been away," said Mr. Lepel.

"Had a headache," said Fred; "it's gone now."

"Let us drink the health of the future prime-minister," said Lord Belden, laughing. They duly performed the ceremony, and Frederick made an amusing burlesque acknowledgment, and declared that he had nothing but the country's welfare at heart, with much facetiousness.

The address came out; the writ came down; the election came off. Frederick had the support of the Radicals, who voted by sympathy; the tradesmen, who voted by interest; Tories, who thought him better than a violent Radical or Chartist; and a miscellaneous crew, who if they did not admire his principles, heartily appreciated his beer. Now-a-days, the "Battle of the

Constitution" is fought in the public-houses. The "Times" had a lively leader on the election, containing three epigrams and a quotation from Virgil, and quizzing Mr. Frederick Lepel most unmercifully, to the intense annoyance of his mamma.

But Frederick was too clever a man to be angry at such a clever attack, and besides, the next number announced his name as a "member elected to serve in the present Parliament."

His speech from the hustings (which, in Huskdale, is generally erected in appropriate proximity to Mr. Rutter's church) was a model of lucidity and terseness. It was clear, practical, and lively.

There is nothing in which our age is so totally deficient as oratory. We have a hundred speakers, but where is the orator? Where shall we find one from whose soul eloquence flows as naturally as poetry from the poet's lips? The true orator is the poet of the practical: he has to bring a great imagination and a deep heart to deal with the business of his day, and by making what is necessary, glorious—and elevating duty into something divine—he should be able to touch the heart of the multitude abroad, as religion or poetry touches it at home. He must be an enthusiast: he must be sincere. He uses rhetoric, but he is not a rhetorician. He must be fearless and simple as a child. He must be warm with earnestness—so shall his words descend on the people like cloven tongues of flame—inspiring, sanctifying, beautiful! He must love the world as Jupiter loved Danaë, and pour himself all abroad upon it, in a shower of gold.

How different such a man from the patcher of gaudy phrases—the trim worker in filagree—the maker of philosophical toys—the Vaucanson of ingenious mental mechanism—the clever artist of sentiment and epigram! Burton tells us, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," of an Eastern monarch who had little birds trained to catch butterflies—a species of hawking that our rhetoricians much remind one of, in their flights. But let us wait; the destinies may yet give us a voice in England, that all men will be glad to hear.

At the time of the Huskdale election of 184— the ingenious bribe of promising to marry one of your constituent's daughters had not been invented; so Frederick Lepel had to make more commonplace professions, and thus, at last, succeeded in obtaining the six-hundred-and-fifty-eighth part of the management of the sceptre of King Alfred.

CHAPTER VII.

Il est trop vrai que l'honneur me l'ordonne,
Que je vous renonce, que je vous abandonne,
Que . . . . .

VOLTAIRE. "Zaïre."

"UPON my word, a brilliant likeness!"

"Quite in the Reynolds style, indeed!"

"How much for a 'portrait in this style,' Mr. Welwyn?" said Miss Beaconsfield, facetiously.

Amidst this kind of brisk tattle was it that Welwyn entered the drawing-room of Dunreddin about noon, a few days after the events recorded in our last.

"What's the matter?" asked Welwyn, with some surprise. Augusta was sitting on the sofa, trifling with a book; Ellen Pierrepoint and some other damsels were fluttering round the table.

"Here it is!" said Ellen; and she held up a sheet of paper covered with heads in pen and ink, in Welwyn's dashing lines. The sheet was a perfect Hydra! There was a terrible similarity in the heads, too! The same majesty of brow, the same finish of outline, the same diadem of hair characterized them all. 'Twas a constellation of Augusta Lepels!

Ellen handed the sheet over to Welwyn, with a little, pert, pretty bow. "I wonder who did these!"

Augusta leaned farther back, and held her volume up before her face.

"I did them," said Welwyn, very quietly; "I think the likeness very good."

"So do I," said Miss Beaconsfield, drily.

"How quickly they must have been dashed off," said the Pierrepoint, with artistic innocence of look. "The fruit of an occupied fancy."

"Very likely," said Welwyn; and he looked her in the face with such tranquil intellectual composure that she was astonished.

Augusta glanced at him, and felt a sudden thrill of pride. Welwyn folded the paper up deliberately, and presented it to her. The aforesaid damsels maintained a grave surprise; some of them, perhaps, interpreting Welwyn's coolness as mere indifference. For this, however, Augusta had too much sympathy and Ellen too much quickness. Miss Beaconsfield really admired the whole scene, and whispered to Miss Pierrepoint that they

made love like crowned heads. Mrs. Lepel, who was employed upon some curious and unintelligible piece of needlework, as elaborate as the Bayeux tapestry, asked carelessly what they were all laughing at? Hers was that happy calmness of temperament which, never moved itself, never suspects emotion in others. It was a coldness of a pleasant sort—refreshing as the chill of a fountain in summer, or a rush of cool air on a sultry day.

She liked Augusta very much as an only daughter, and (somewhat to her own surprise), a good deal more besides, for her rare and beautiful qualities. Augusta was of that peculiar class of the gifted who are not conscious of their gifts, and who, when they have done or said anything very fine, are as much surprised at it as others are delighted. She really blushed if she was "caught out" in an accomplishment, which gave occasion to some people to say that she was a "consummate actress"—a piece of praise which, considering that *they* were generally very bad actresses or actors, showed a degree of appreciation uncommonly rare, both on and off the stage.

Mrs. Lepel not being particularly ambitious, would have been quite willing that Augusta should have made a commonplace match—with one of the country-people of equal family—with a *very* well-endowed parson of good connections, or so forth. In the case of a very furious attachment, I dare say she would have abated two avuncular baronets, a consobrinal lord, and a corresponding amount of rent. But see what it is to have a youth of abilities and perseverance in a family! Frederick was bent on his sister's doing in the matrimonial what he himself proposed to do in the political world. Visions of an opening of Parliament, where one distinguished Lepel was addressed among the faithful Commons by royal lips, while his sister, as a peeress, gazed on the imperial show, were present to that active-minded boy at an early age.

Having been educated by a private tutor (an inestimable advantage to a person of talents), he grew up without being influenced by the traditions of public schools or universities. While his cousins and contemporaries were learning to write what Peacock calls an Anglo-Celtic dialect of Latin, and to read a few bits of a few classic authors, Frederick was learning the learning of his day. Having thus got a taste for reading from what he liked to read, he came to the classics as a friend, and not as a slave or drudge. He had accordingly a far better acquaintance with the ancient literature in a few years than those who knew nothing else. When you come in contact with a crack orthodox youth, you will find that he can perhaps write tolerable Alcaics, and can produce a decent (though woodenish) version of Tennyson's

"Queen of the May," in Latin. Does he know anything of the Roman literature? Has he read anything of Cicero, except the Orations against Cataline, and the "De Officiis?" Ask his tutor! And breathe it softly, for perhaps the worthy man has not himself!

When the Lepels went abroad, Frederick enjoyed the further advantage—so strikingly pointed out by the author of "Conings-by"—of meeting remarkable men who would speak freely and boldly. And abroad, a man will far easier get society, in proportion to his own personal merits, than in England. He met all sorts of strange thinkers — Gemans, hot from metaphysics; Italians, mystical and liberal; Frenchmen, of eclectic philosophy and downright worldliness of practice; and calm, accomplished, sceptical diplomatists, who would smile away the enthusiasm of a Festus, and disconcert a rebellious archangel in offering him a pinch of snuff! At all the great towns the Lepels were in the best society—as became a family standing equally well in the books of "Burke" or "Coutts!" and Frederick mixed with every class — exiled democrats, Jesuits, and *chasseurs d'Afrique;* he became addicted to dissipation, without the recklessness and gaiety which make it more pardonable and more ruinous; finally, he became that mixture of Manchester political theories and Parisian moral principles which we have seen. A terrible and repulsive young gentleman he would have been, but for a lively wit and a good-natured temperament.

It was on board the "Altercation," a steamer, which then ran between Marseilles and Naples, that the Lepels encountered my Lord Belden. The old Mr. Lepel had known him as a boy at Clangour Castle. Indeed, part of the estates of the earl had once belonged to the Lepel family, which (as is often the case now-a-days) was of a better descent than its more magnificent and imperial neighbour. Frederick was a model of a travelling companion, and won the young lord's heart before he had told him his name. A man of the Clangour rank has no need to wrap himself up in the wretched exclusiveness of petty gentry and mushroom bourgeois. They were soon intimate. Frederick's name was mentioned. Belden at once knew it—knew all about them—rushed into talk about "the county," and joined the travelling circle. He was in gloomy spirits at that time, having recently, in his travels in Syria, lost his cousin (the Honourable H. Troubadour, son of Viscount ————), who was smitten by a *coup de soleil* as they were riding from Beyrout to Damascus, and died by the roadside near a little village, with Arab women crying beside him, and his mother's name upon his lips.

Belden was good-natured and sensible to that degree, that he felt rather ashamed of being heir to the earldom of Clangour

without having done anything to deserve it. Perhaps he would not have objected to being taxed for it, to satisfy his conscience; and indeed so honourable a capitation-tax levied on the aristocracy would at once do credit to them, and do good to the revenue. He was an intelligent, indolent person, rather silent as regarded giving opinions, but who read many and many a sound page of knowledge over a cigar, oftener than the world gave him credit for. And the liberality which his position prevented him from showing in political action was amply gratified in his private doings.

Frederick early marked out this youth for a brother-in-law.

"I envy sentimental people, Belden," he would say, as they were playing billiards. "I am not so myself, but I envy Augusta." He used to joke Augusta, privately, about the splendour of a coronet, Belden's devotion, &c. They were thrown together oftener than Augusta liked, and certainly her graceful and imperial bearing made more impression on Belden's heart than the attractions of any other girl ever did. To be sure, there were many and many eligible young ladies brought before his notice by affectionate mammas, more particularly during the crisis of that middle class exultation and ambition which followed, a few years ago, on the conquest of the heir of a dukedom, by the daughter of T. Blubber, Esq. —— at ——. Ah, that was a romantic history! She nursed the youthful dukeling in his illness, saved him from the churchyard, and carried him to the church. "Ah!" quoth his facetious grace, a few years after, "I had rather she had deposited me peaceably outside?"

Frederick came into the drawing-room just as Welwyn had given his sister the drawings. With an eye that saw all, and a face that revealed nothing, he took in the whole scene.

"Augusta, show me those sketches, will you, dear?" he said, in a fraternal voice. Augusta handed the paper to him. He looked at the heads with great good-nature. "How very pretty! Your execution, eh, Welwyn? Mamma, have you seen these?"

Augusta coloured and felt hurt, for she saw his intent. Meanwhile, Mrs. Lepel looked complacently at them. "Very pretty, indeed." They had only a commonplace interest for her eyes. Frederick folded them up, and put them in his pocket.

"A fine day for the winter," he said, carelessly looking out of the window. "I am going over to the castle to dinner." So saying, he left the room. As Welwyn stood at the window, a little while after, he saw the servant holding the avenue-gate open, and he saw Frederick on horseback, trotting quietly out. He remained gazing at his vanishing figure, in a state of dreamy reverie—then turned. The drawing-room was empty.

"'I am half-sick of shadows,'"

muttered Welwyn, quoting from the "Lady of Shalott." There is a relief and an inspiration in quoting, when we are melancholy, such as the miser feels in counting and rattling his gold.

Welwyn wandered about the gorgeous room, musing. What weariness, what sickness it is, to be in love! Before we can get to the Elysian Fields, we *must* cross the Styx. And, in England, we have a frightful amount of money to pay the boatman!

Notwithstanding how brutally hackneyed the term Platonic Love has become, how vulgarized it has been, there is a divinity in love which we would do well to remember. Instead of defining love, suppose we were to begin by admitting that the best thing about it is, that it cannot be defined! Do you love your friend? If so, try and say why. When you have exhausted all the secondary parts of your attachment, similarity of tastes, convenience, and the rest of it, is there not a spirituality at last about your feelings towards him, inexplicable as your own being, or as gravitation? Abandon yourself to that spirituality, friend. As the natural philosophers who write on mechanics tell us, that a stone set rolling down a hill covered with various obstacles, will yet, demonstratively, run by the directest line possibly conceivable; even so will the moral nature, flowing on, instinctively, and by a higher law than our volition, find the course best for it.

. . . . So mused Welwyn, reflecting on the love that day by day he felt growing in his being for Augusta. He paced the room anxiously.—He saw the handle of the door move. Instinctively he *felt* that she was there. The door opened, and she entered. They had never exchanged a word of confidence, but each knew that the other loved, as well as if it had been written on the sky.

"I did not know you were here, Mr. Welwyn," said Augusta, simply. "I came to look for something I left."

Welwyn knew she was speaking literal truth. It is a vulgar affection that quibbles and plays tricks. Those who play at hide-and-seek, are those who are not worth seeking.

"I am glad you have come, Miss Lepel," he said; "I have been wishing to speak to you."

Augusta was bending over the table. Her heart beat as she looked up, but her eyes met his gaze with a calmness as great as their beauty. They said "speak" as plainly as light. But, at that moment, Welwyn turned pale. No:—he would not compromise her by attaching her affections to his miserable fortunes.

"You have much to forgive me for," he said. "Forgive me if I am silent now."—

The door opened. Ellen Pierrepoint came in. She saw the crisis. Inwardly, she exulted that she had come in time. "Ah, Augusta—let me help you to look for that." She drew her arm round Augusta's waist. A tear fell upon her curls. Welwyn left the room.

Two days passed. Frederick had come back from Clangour Castle in great good-humour, and towards Welwyn was particularly kind and attentive. He knew how Welwyn loved his sister:—he knew how it was returned. But he was far too much a man of the world to cause any violent interference. What—a scene! A quarrel with a gentlemanly young man! Make his sister violently miserable, and Belden break off, and the family sympathetic and disturbed! Not he. But——!

'Twas breakfast time at Dunreddin. Everybody was down to breakfast that morning. Frederick had good spirits enough for two—and there were certainly two who wanted them in the party.

"You don't look as if you had slept well, Mr. Welwyn," said Mrs. Lepel, innocently.

"He must have another blanket put on his bed!" said Frederick, chipping an egg. "Take some honey, Welwyn, *fragrantia mella*, my boy. I planted some heather, under the advice of the Scotchman who was here some time ago—on purpose for our bees."

"What nonsense you talk, Fred," said his mother.

"An M.P. talk nonsense! Breach of privilege," said Frederick, laughing.

A servant entered with the morning's letters. Conspicuous among them was one for Welwyn—almost as long as a coffin, and about as cheerful—marked in the corner, *On Her Majesty's Service*, and stamped with the Admiralty seal. There was an awkward pause while he opened it. He coughed. Frederick's eye rested, only for an instant, on his sister's face—and she turned it away transparent with blushes.

Welwyn was appointed one of the lieutenants of her Majesty's Yacht.

CHAPTER VIII.

A liberal nature and a niggard doom.
FORSTER: *Dedication of his Life of Goldsmith.*

WELWYN read the letter aloud. It was an excellent appointment—honourable, and with the certainty of promotion. The company congratulated him, and none more warmly than Frede-

rick, who knew well what bitterness lurked in the good fortune. Welwyn folded the letter up deliberately, talked of the necessity of going, and so the breakfast passed over. All day long he was restless and disturbed to a degree that he could not have conceived possible. Ah, it is all very well to fancy that we know the metaphysics of love! Where are we when it comes in form? It is fine to theorise about gravitation; but woe to us when we fall from a tower, and it seizes us in practice! Welwyn tried to read newspapers, and found himself poring over the lists of marriages. What "disappointed" person has not done that, morbidly, sadly, dreamily, and found a new and wondrous interest excited by the names of strangers—names which before he would have seen with equal indifference in the marriages or deaths! Who does not love love for the interest it invests everything with? How the "disappointed" sympathises with Miss Tomkins, who at last has gained her Charles—feels ready to embrace Charles himself—though perhaps the fellow is a prig or a screw, and is only marrying as he would take a shop or hire a house! How the "disappointed" watches an engaged couple employed in that deliciously romantic practice of the middle classes—purchasing furniture, and cheapening chimney ornaments! "Stony-hearted" Baker Street—thou that listenest to the sighing of accomplished girls, and drinkest the tears of law-students—think of the Disappointed in time!

Bah! Ever since Wealth married with Humbug, and produced their offspring—Respectability—their progeny has been increasing in power. And in a few years, unless modern notions alter, younger sons who want wives will have to rush in a body on the respectable neighbourhood—like Romulus and his friends on the Sabines—and end by founding a colony in one of the suburbs!

So Welwyn had to make preparations for going. He resolved to visit Mr. Fontenoy. The fresh spring air did his blood good, as he marched along the lanes to Heatherby. The snowdrops were just out; the spark of floral fire from which the flame of the crocus was to burn was just lighted in the earth; the hedges began to have a gleam of green here and there. Everything was fresh and hopeful, and Mr. Fontenoy was sitting, in a warm dressing-gown, over a blazing fire in his study.

"Ah, Mr. Welwyn! Glad to see you, sir." The fire was strong enough to roast an ox, but not to melt Mr. Fontenoy.

"I am about to go to sea again, sir," said his visitor. It was occurring to Welwyn that he would invite the confidence of this man, who, after all, was his connection.

"To sea—indeed! I envy a man with an active professon. Such a fine profession, too!"

"I am not an object for envy, just now," said Welwyn, "The fact is," here Welwyn drew his chair nearer Mr. Fontenoy, "I was thinking of consulting you."

A horrible idea struck Mr. Fontenoy. Was the youth going to borrow money from him? His face fell; Welwyn perceived it. As he did not suspect a meanness in any man, he guessed, at first, that Mr. Fontenoy had probably perceived signs of his unfortunate attachment, and feared the subject. Unhappily, however, that gentleman's first excitement took verbal form, and he muttered something about "rents." Welwyn saw his mistake, and laughed. If he had looked hurt or angry, Mr. Fontenoy would not have cared. The laugh galled him; to hurt such a character's meanness is to wound his *amour propre*. He drew himself up—"I excite your merriment, Mr. Welwyn," he said, with a magnificent air.

Welwyn rose from his chair. "You mistake me if you think I wish to annoy you. But, Mr. Fontenoy, I was going to ask your opinion. You are my relation. I am your son's dearest friend."

"Mr. Welwyn," said Mr. Fontenoy, rising too, "however honoured I should feel by your relationship, you will perhaps excuse me if I state that facts induce me to doubt that connection." He played with some papers on the table with a hand that trembled a little. Welwyn's blue eyes rested on his hard, worldly features—large with inquiry. He waited in solemn silence for him to continue. Mr. Fontenoy felt very agitated. He wished that he could get into a rage, but was awed and kept cold by his companion's coolness. There was a silence.

"I have spoken, sir," said Mr. Fontenoy, seeing that Welwyn did not speak.

"Ours are not minds between which there can be much sympathy, I know," said Welwyn. "But perhaps you will be good enough to explain yourself."

"Well, sir," said Mr. Fontenoy, attempting a sneer, "I will try. I have reason to doubt, sir, whether my marriage—that marriage, sir, which alone would unite us in any way (you are not of the Fontenoys, sir!)—was a legal marriage! It is a question, sir."

"Mr. Fontenoy! Remember, sir, that even in *this* house you are in the presence of God," said Welwyn, mastering a cold sickness that struck him.

"It is my house, sir, and I won't be dictated to here!" said Mr. Fontenoy, moving to the bell-rope. Welwyn placed himself between him and the wall. "Wait." Sickened as he was, and shrinking from the disgraceful arbitrament of a personal struggle, he made up his mind to have a thorough explanation; and with

the disciplined firmness of his profession, adopted the natural means.

"Be good enough to tell me precisely what your words mean, Mr. Fontenoy? Do you call your son a bastard, and dishonour his mother's grave?" As Welwyn spoke, he accidentally saw his face in a mirror, and started at its deathlike pallor.

"Very forcible words—fine language, no doubt," said Mr. Fontenoy, who seemed to think that sneering was his safest point. "I speak as a man of business, sir, and say plainly, that I don't think the marriage which I was foolishly led into, as a boy, was a legal marriage. I don't consider the offspring of that marriage entitled to succeed to the hereditary estates of the house. I have reason to believe this, since you choose to push the subject; and arrangements, sir, are being made about it, which will change the condition of all parties."

"I won't talk to you of high feeling or generous sentiment," said Welwyn; "but according to your own small laws—which have the world for a god, and the belly for an altar—I believe you will ultimately find you are wrong."

"Ah—ha!" said Mr. Fontenoy, grinning in a ghastly manner, and showing his teeth, as a corpse does in death sometimes, "let those exult who win! Look here, sir,—look here!" he went on, taking up a bundle of papers. "Look at the boy's extravagance! And, I hear, he has formed what he calls an attachment. I have news preparing for him!"

"God help him," said Welwyn, calmly.

"If he marries, he may provide for himself."

"God bless him," said Welwyn, again.

"And if he leaves his profession, he may starve," added Mr. Fontenoy, with a jerk. He pronounced the word "starve" with the gusto which a good worldly man gives it.

"God watch over him," said Welwyn, once more. "And for you, sir," he added, "good-bye. Live on in your heartlessness, as a toad lives in stone!"

Mr. Fontenoy rang the bell. Welwyn moved to the door, and passed downstairs. A livery-servant attended in the hall. The master came half way down stairs. "Good morning, Mr. Welwyn. Charles, the door. A fine day!"

Welwyn passed silently out, and exulted as he found himself once more in the fresh spring air. On he went through the lanes that led to Dunreddin. He fell into a profound reverie on what he had just heard—on all he had lately suffered. He was so absorbed in his thoughts, that as he entered the avenue, it was with his head drooping on his breast. His cap pushed rather back, left the fair amplitude of his brow exposed, and his dark hair hung loosely about it. Two young ladies watched

him from the window. One of them drew back. "What is the matter, Augusta?" said the other.

"Pshaw, you know, Ellen." Ellen was silent. She felt that she had played falsely and cruelly against her friend. And for what? For the love of Frederick Lepel! She had hurt a good heart for the sake of a questionable one; and had after all, perhaps, not gained that! The cold and bad part of the world owes the success which it generally meets in temporal matters a great deal to the alliance of better natures which it employs and imposes on.

When Welwyn arrived, he learnt that the coach, which he had determined to travel by, started from Huskdale early next morning. The Lepels had asked several people to dinner, in order that he might be—so Mr. Lepel had planned it—as lively, the last day of his stay, as possible.

"You have seen Mr. Fontenoy then?" said Mr. Lepel.

"Yes, sir," said Welwyn, with a melancholy air.

"Has he any news of Singleton this time?" inquired the old gentleman, jocularly. "My God," thought Welwyn, "what will these good-hearted people think when they hear what I have heard!" But he did not think it right to speak on the subject; so he made some off-hand answer. His gloominess was noticed by everybody. He felt it—so strove against it as much as possible. He would not leave unhappiness as his legacy to a family that had treated him so kindly. He determined to have no scene—no explanation with Augusta. "Keep up to day, oh, my heart!" he thought; "and when once I am away, break if you will!" He longed, indeed, to be off, and alone with his sorrow.

After dinner, he found himself for a short time alone with Lord Belden. It was from this nobleman—as the reader has, of course, guessed—that Frederick had procured Welwyn's appointment. Belden, who knew nothing of the intrigues of his young friend, naturally fancied that Welwyn knew the fact. Being a modest man, he felt the awkwardness of imposing a sense of obligation on anybody, so was desirous of putting Welwyn at his ease.

"I trust you will have a pleasant journey, Mr. Welwyn," he said, kindly. "I'm afraid the new kind of duty will be dull to one who is familiar with war."

Welwyn was thinking of something else at the moment. Perhaps he looked confused as he muttered a civil answer.

He wants to thank me, but is shy, poor fellow, thought his lordship. "We have not much interest with the present people," he said, "or we might have got you something better."

"Your lordship is very good," said Welwyn, bowing. The sentence puzzled him a little at first. All at once the real state of things flashed on him. He had never suspected it before—strangely enough. But he decided not to say anything to Lord Belden about it; so repeated his thanks more gracefully, and changed the conversation. When Frederick came in, which he did soon after, he found them chatting on indifferent subjects.

The evening in the drawing-room was not lively. Welwyn was to leave extremely early in the morning, to catch the coach at Huskdale. And when the party broke up for the night, that was to be his last glimpse of Augusta. He sat, as he thought of it, gazing stupidly at her, as the bird of night gazes at the moon. The conversation flagged; so much so that a sigh was audible in the silence. At last came the hour of good-bye and good night. The door shut upon Welwyn, like the door of a vault or a prison.

In the early morning he awoke. Frederick was to accompany him over to Huskdale. They started from Dunreddin. They reached the "George" before the time.

As they were waiting in a private room, Frederick, who had been for some time walking about restlessly, stopped suddenly, and said—

"By the bye, Welwyn, you saw Mr. Fontenoy—did not you—yesterday?"

"Yes."

"I somehow dislike that man," said Frederick, with an appearance of warmth.

"I do so, thoroughly," said Welwyn. "He is cold, and mean, and mediocre."

"Here comes the coach!" cried Frederick, looking from the window. "And now, Welwyn," he continued, turning round to him, "I am going to say something to you, if I may take the liberty."

Welwyn turned suddenly red, and held his breath. He could not fancy but that Lepel must be about to allude to the One subject.

"I don't know anything about your circumstances, old boy, but perhaps you are put to expense in joining your ship. If so, you know, let me do the Rothschild. This is a great commercial country, as they say in Huskdale; and I shall be happy to lend you ——"

"Oh, thank you. You're very kind. But a small patrimony suffices for a philosopher," said Welwyn, kindly. He felt inclined to smile, as he thought how odd it was that this unscrupulous youth, who would have broken his heart to further his

ambition, should make an offer so kind according to everybody's ideas.

"Well, take a cigar," said Frederick, laughing, as he unclasped his cigar-case. "Good-bye!"

Welwyn jumped into the coach. It rolled off. Frederick was out of his sight in a moment.

Welwyn had to wait some time at Penguin, from which town he wrote off letters to his sister at Malta, and to Singleton. A paragraph for the last of these was furnished by a strange incident which he saw in that town.

It chanced that he was strolling in the morning near an ancient church. The door was open. He went in, and saw that a baptism was about to be performed. The group were rather singular-looking people. The mother, a pretty, blue-eyed young wife; her husband, a meek young man, of scholastic aspect, who seemed afraid of his baby. But *the* strange figure was that of an elderly gentleman in black, of erudite look, snuffy, absent, of solemn glance, and grave air. The quiet appearance of the whole scene struck Welwyn's imagination, and he leaned against a pew and looked on.

The clergyman took up his station, and asked what name was to be given to the child—a boy.

"Julius Placidus," said the elderly gentleman, with a solemn expression of face.

The clergyman looked surprised. "I don't remember that name," he said, mildly.

"It will be found in 'Tacitus, the History,' book iii., chapter 84. [See Brotier's edition.] He was the tribune of the cohort who dragged Vitellius from his hiding-place."

The clergyman stared. The name was duly given.

"God bless me," mused Welwyn, "what a singular set!"

As they passed by him, the blue-eyed mother stared at him very hard, and he heard her mutter to her husband, "I have seen a face like that before."

"A face like that before," thought Welwyn. "Who, in the name of goodness, are they?"

The sexton lingered behind to close the church, and respectfully waited for Welwyn, who was gazing at the escutcheons. Welwyn, as he came out, handed him a trifle. "Who were these people here just now?" he asked.

"Them, sir? Dr. Helot, the schoolmaster. It was the christening o' the little one of his daughter Lallyger,—her as married Mr. Rigg.

"Married Mr. Rigg," soliloquized Welwyn, as he strolled away, almost stumbling over the graves. "Married Mr. Rigg! Will Augusta marry a *Lord* Rigg, I wonder!

> "'Keep thee, to-day,
> To-morrow, for ever,
> Free as an Arab
> Of thy beloved!'

"Ah, no, no! My thoughts—my being—turn as restlessly to her ever—as the vane on yon spire to the wind!"

BOOK THE LAST.

REST.

CHAPTER I.

Everything thou hast touched, I love; everything thou speakest of, I love: thy hand played with these vine-leaves,—I wear them in my bosom.
SIR E. B. LYTTON'S *Zanoni*.

AND now, oh, kindly reader, whose cigar I have accompanied, or whose sofa I have shared, let us follow the swallow and fly again to the South. We cross France, we enter on a purple wilderness of sea, the eye is dazzled by the silver scales of sunlight on its surface; presently, a white island emerges from the ocean—like a dove from violets,—it is Malta. It is summer-time in Malta; titans of flowers begin to threaten heaven with their nodding heads, the almond-trees are loaded with the sleek hairy pods which hold the fruit; it is very hot, so that sometimes in the middle of the day the air wraps one round like scented cambric!

In 184—, her Majesty's Ship "Cleopatra," 120, came out to assume the command of the Mediterranean, with Admiral Sir Booby Booing on board, and fifty pounds' worth of Madeira in the midshipman's gunroom. The "Cleopatra" was the last result—the crowning specimen—of modern naval improvement. From the days of grand old Blake—when waggon-loads of silver, taken from the Spanish, reeled through London streets—to the days of the "Cleopatra," what a change! From Blake dying in his rude cabin in the English Channel, to Booing drawing table-money of £800 a year to feed friends, what a change! Of the mere physical changes in the service, in living, and so on, perhaps much complaint should not be made: forms of living have altered everywhere. But from Blake and his officers, bent on doing God's work on the waters, and with a faith as strong as their oaken ships, to Booing, with his belief in the dockyard, and reverence for the powers that are *in*,—Lieutenant Primby's dandyism, and Captain Paggles' piano,—there has been a change by no means for the better!

The "Cleopatra" having anchored in Malta, and been subse-

quently moored at a "broth of a *buoy*," in the Grand Harbour, remained there,

"As idle as a painted ship,
Upon a painted ocean."

Fontenoy was appointed to her, shortly after her arrival, the "Patagonian" having, by this time, been ordered home; her commission was nearly over, but the paying-off time was somewhat accelerated by an accident. The "Patagonian," in fact, in a fit of rhinocerean playfulness, bumped herself on shore on the coast of Spain, the rudder was carried away, the false keel was damaged; she was ordered to proceed to England, and Captain Pannikin retired into private life once more.

Duty on board the "Cleopatra" was of a light and airy character. The hands were turned up to drill at daylight, when the midshipmen, in blanket trousers and otherwise gay *dishabille*, ran about actively enough,—the watches were slept through with praiseworthy regularity,—general quarters were occasionally indulged in, when a newly-invented trumpet for summoning the boarders caused much fun, noise, and confusion. During the ship's company's dinner-time, it was found necessary to partake of ices, which an old Frenchman brought off in a curious machine, nice and cool; plum-cake is not a very absurd concomitant of lemon-ice, and after both, a cigar is refreshing. Besides, the gunroom mess did not dine till six, when they partook of some dozen of made dishes, &c., served in a really respectable style upon china adorned with the mess arms (a donkey rampant), and accompanied by iced wine. To live near the shore of a populous island without landing there is at least tedious, which was probably the reason why the gentlemen of the "Cleopatra" were constantly landing. To facilitate landing, a good boat should be always at hand: they *had* a good boat always at hand, and adorned with a mess flag; one boat is scarcely enough for many people, other boats were constantly hovering about. Boats are expensive when constantly employed—and this was perhaps the reason why, when a batch of youngsters came off in one, they were each so anxious not to be the last man in getting out. The last man cannot have money always, and this was *undoubtedly* the reason why Jigger, of the "Bustard," was frequently seized by the leg by the boatman, when the ardour of professional duty made him show unusual haste in leaving!

It was the middle of the day,—several gentlemen of the "Cleopatra" were seated in a cabin on the main-deck,—it belonged to the third lieutenant, who allowed it to be used as a lounge. Pug Welby was reclining on the bed, which in the daytime became a sofa; Blanchard, a mate, and Sutherland, a midshipman, were seated in chairs; also a youngster, with an odd mark on the tip

of his nose, produced by the incision of a penknife and the rubbing in of salt—a process which had recently been performed on him by an "oldster" of South Sea tastes.

"How's the leg, Pug?" said Blanchard, alluding to the accident which had befallen him some months before.

"Capital," said Pug, stretching it out; "I wish I had not broken it a second time; it was that that delayed it."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Blanchard, yawning; "can you kick with it,—try it on the youngster!"

Little Pipp, the youngster alluded to, jumped up in a fright. "Please not, Mr. Welby!" He was a little, pale boy, of sickly constitution, and had been sent to sea by his father, a rich merchant, at the instigation of a second wife.

"Adjust him," said Pug, with a severe air. Pipp was seized by Blanchard and Sutherland, and placed in a convenient position,—he raised a dismal howl,—Pug let him go; at that instant Fontenoy came in—he had a note in his hand, and seemed somewhat anxious.

"Oh! Welby—would you mind keeping my 'four to six' watch?" he said.

"Hem! Anything particular?"

Singleton coloured slightly. "Yes, I have promised to go on shore."

"Well, sit down a minute, old fellow. Don't be in such a hurry. How different you are to what you used to be."

"Am I?" said Singleton, smiling, and tapping with his fingers on the breech of the gun which occupied part of the cabin.

"You have lost your gaiety, and you are getting monkish. You talk like an epitaph. There's as much difference between you now, and what you were last winter, as between Æneas on the course, and Æneas drawing the Snobkins' *calèche*, which is his present employment."

Singleton smiled. "You'll keep the watch at all events, in spite of my degeneracy?"

"Yes—but be a man, and drop in at Ricardo's. Good-bye." Singleton departed. He descended to the cockpit, and presently popped through the middle-deck port, holding a small carpet-bag in his hand. The boatman into whose boat he got, pulled away towards Burmola. Singleton left the carpet-bag at an inn, and then took his way to a square not far off. He knocked, and was admitted by an old woman.

"Is the father in?"

She motioned to him to go upstairs. As he reached the door of the room, he fancied he heard voices talking inside. He tapped.

"Come in."

Singleton entered. Father Ada was alone—at his table.

Singleton glanced round the apartment, curiously and uneasily. There were no signs of any other human being there. The priest noticed his look.

"You thought you heard something?"

"Yes," said Singleton, colouring.

"I was reading aloud. But sit down, Mr. Fontenoy. You are looking rather unwell. Your eye is unnaturally bright. The colour on your cheek flushes and goes abruptly. Take care—there is a *dira cohors febrium* in this island, always in full force in summer."

"Yes, indeed," said Singleton, with a sigh; "but see, I have brought you some of your books back." As he spoke, he laid on the table two or three volumes of controversial theology. "Bad enough is fever; but worst of all is the fever of the mind, with its thirst for truth and peace."

The father gazed at him, adjusted the skull-cap on his pale forehead, and wrote something with a pen.

Singleton moved about the room, restlessly. "Father, how long have I known you—since we met in St. John's?"

"Some months;—but, Fontenoy, do you like the Latin of that Treatise? It seems to have the homely, rather slatternly garb of one who used the tongue for familiar purposes; it wants the finish, the dignity, the compactness of the classic writers."

Singleton turned the pages of the book listlessly; he threw it down again; then carelessly turned to another.

"That is a strange face, that face of Loyola! and what a story, his! My God—when one thinks of these grand enthusiasts, one ought to blush at the sight of their portraits."

"You read the 'Life' I gave you, I think," said Father Adda.

"Yes; but—poor human nature—one is staggered at such stories as his getting a miraculous insight into the mystery of the Trinity, and so on." The father was silent. Then he again asked Singleton to sit down, and why he was so restless. The colour hovered about Singleton's cheek as he did so. He sat down, and leaned upon his hands; then, suddenly he raised his head, and stood up once more.

"Father," he said, "I have pondered deeply on what I have heard and learned from you. For years I have hungered and pined for a principle of Faith and action; and now, something in my heart whispers that I may yet find peace in your Church!"

The priest's eyes brightened calmly, and their light seemed reflected on his brow.

"My son," he said, "these feelings are not my creation; but, beware how you neglect impulses which we have a right to believe may be the vibrations of the heart under the touch of the finger of God."

Singleton was suddenly awed; then he stopped short, and said that he must go. The father rose to conduct him; they paused on the threshold. Singleton turned back—

"Give me your blessing."

"With all my heart."

"I shall see you again soon."

"In the mean time—Peace to you."

"Good day."

And away went Singleton. He reached the little inn where he had been before the visit. He went in, changed his uniform for plain clothes, and once more crossed the harbour in a boat for Valetta; it was about four o'clock. He went to a house in Strada Forni; a horse was waiting for him: he mounted it, and rode off. As he passed the walls of Florian Gardens, the carriages of the garrison people were moving about; the Brantons, too, were abroad; Dulcimer was leaning languidly back in their carriage.

"How do, Fontenoy?" he said, as Singleton came near them.

"I hope you are well," said Fontenoy, taking off his cap to the party.

"Do you know that there is to be no Regatta this year? The admiral is opposed to it; and says that if they have one, the boats must race with their guns in."

"Indeed."

"However, there's one thing; a boat can't break its knees if it does lose," said Dulcimer, smiling.

"You've been reading, I see," said Fontenoy, drily.

"Ha, hem! What did you give for that fellow, if it's a fair question," said Dulcimer, glancing at Singleton's horse.

"A dollar for the evening! Good day!" Singleton trotted off, and presently broke into a canter. "These people kill me," he muttered. "Fancy it's taking six thousand years for the earth to turn up such a set."

He cantered on along the high road towards Citta Vecchia; and presently he turned his horse's head down a lane, and proceeded at a slow pace. He passed through a small village with a church, with some high trees in front of it. A Maltese boy came running out of a house to hold the horse; Singleton dismounted, and proceeded on.

Meanwhile, within a few hundred yards of him, in the garden of an old-fashioned house of the times of De L'Isle Adam, strolled Ivy Welwyn. She looked something between a nun and a naiad! Her dress was simple and sombre. Her black hair, which seemed steeped in darkness, was plainly arranged. Her beautiful features were pale. But every now and then her deep violet eyes gleamed with such a lively light, and her slight

figure moved with such a playful grace, that you wondered how she could be solemn. It suggested "Il Penseroso," set to music by Auber!

In her hand she held a string of ebony beads. She raised them, and played with them carelessly. Her fancies wantoned in the light of love, like waves in the rays of the moon. She moved through the grass of the garden, and listened. Not a sound! Mechanically, her white fingers arranged the beads, as she mused.

"For two days he has not been here! He is right. I have told him, that for me to love is sin. He spares me sorrow and penance. I should like to know that he is well!"

Down dropped a bead.

"What a load I have to carry to the confessional! and I come away with a heavy heart still,—his presence relieves me. I hope he is not ill!"

Down dropped a bead.

"The greater my love, the greater my guilt,—as the oranges of Sicily are then ripest when they most resemble blood! Oh, my cousin! though you have taken my heart, let me save my soul! Is he ill?"

Down dropped a bead.

"Signora!"

She turned,—the beads dropped. The old lady who lived with her as a guardian,—long a friend of the Welwyns and of the house into which the fathers of Fontenoy and Welwyn married,—came out into the garden.

"Your cousin is coming!"

She started, and stamped her little foot on the grass, in anxiety and indecision. "I am gone!—say I am away!"

She bounded in at the hall door, and left the old lady alone. A sharp rapping was heard at the garden gate,—there was Singleton. He came to the gate with breathless hope and eagerness in his eyes,—he never fancied that Ivy would not be in the house,—he did not dare!

"Where is Ivy?"

"She is away, signor,—she is out."

"What! Do you jest?" His lips seemed hardening into marble.

"She is gone out, signor. You are not alarmed, are you?"

He turned away, and, pulling his cap over his eyes, dragged slowly along, like a wounded man. There was a gathering of sorrow swelling in his heart and pressing on him, like the rising waves on one who has been tied to a stake on the beach, and left to die in the full of the tide.

"Singleton!"

"Ivy! Oh, my heavens,—how cruel you are!"

She had come running out, and she stood there before him with face flushed and eyes trembling with light.

"Forgive me, Singleton,—I trifled with you."

He leaned against the wall, and put his hand to his heart,—for a moment he had turned as pale as death. "Ivy," he said; "in the name of God, never trifle so again. Tell me that you will never see me more, and let me go and die; but do not make my heart a toy, and break it in sport!"

"You know I would not, Singleton. It is I who suffer,—and for you."

"Well—don't cry, dear; your tears burn my heart. Look up. The sky is red with roses and gold. Do you see that bridge of white cloud? Darling, I should like to wander on it with you, and we would forget the world for ever. Ivy, do you listen?"

"I have listened too much to you, Singleton: I must tell you again and again, that the language of love is out of place when it is addressed to me. What does it mean?" and Ivy turned pale. "We cannot be united. You know to what future I have devoted myself, and you—you are but a boy!"

"My child," interrupted Singleton, "you make me miserable; be still, I am your slave, but I cannot obey you in this. Bid me do anything, and I will do it—except forget you."

The girl was silent. The silence was broken by the sound of the church bell in the neighbouring village: it filled the air with voices. The lovers looked at each other's eyes in silence. The ebony beads had fallen on the grass, and sparkled in the green setting. Singleton picked them up.

"When I am with you," he said, "my thoughts string themselves in prayers, like these beads."

"Think more of the prayers than of me," said the girl, solemnly.

"One day, perhaps, we shall kneel together under the same roof. Since I have known you, dear—look up, Ivy, I can speak better when I see your eyes—I have experienced again that happy, holy feeling which I first felt, when, as a boy, I awoke to the knowledge that sun and stars are here for a higher purpose than to give us warmth and light. Ivy, you have been a priest to me; and sometimes I think that that great Church, to which our mothers belonged, ought to be my soul's home. Ivy, your love keeps me in purity and aspiration: it keeps my holiest feelings alive, as breath keeps the flame flickering as it rises to-

wards heaven. My thoughts float upon the river of your hair. It is with my whole nature that I adore you. I love your pure spirit—I love your sweet face."

He spoke with such passion that the beads trembled and rattled in his hand. He felt a thrill across his lips as if a silken thread quivered through them. The girl had listened with down-cast eyes,—rising and falling in emotion, as a bird rises and falls on the bosom of a swelling sea.

"Ivy—speak to me—do you love me?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" cried the girl, passionately, while her eyes glistened with the spray from her heart. . . . "That is why I am so unhappy. Oh, God, this is sin! Go, Singleton—go; leave me to solitude and prayer—go!"

She stamped her little foot upon the grass. The violet fire in her eyes was most painful to see; the tears started down her cheeks, and drying suddenly, left a scorching trace. Her whole nature was struggling with the heavy burden of care that her strange and dark education had imposed on her.

—— Poor Ivy! I cannot describe her properly—I love her too well!

Singleton did go, and they parted more calmly; but he did not know what she suffered: day by day she was getting more pale. There *are* people in the world who can watch such changes in those for whom they ought to be ready to shed their heart's blood, quite calmly,—can measure their misery as coolly as an undertaker measures a corpse. Not so Singleton.

It was twilight as he drew near Valetta. The reins had fallen on his horse's neck, and he was again musing. As he cast his eyes on the road, he saw the shadow of a figure cast there by the moon, which was just up. He looked behind.

"What! Father Adda!"

"Yes," said a calm voice. It was the priest's.

"Where have you been?"

"To Bokkar."

That was the name of the village which was close by Ivy's house; the mention made Singleton feel somewhat uncomfortable.

"Indeed. I have been near there," said Fontenoy, quietly.

"I saw you; I did not like to delay you. But you see I have overtaken you."

"Yes, my horse carries double—

'Post equitem sedet, atra cura,'

as Horace says. No wonder I came so slow."

"There is peace for us all if we seek it," said the priest, "if the care be a worthy care. We must distinguish between divine sorrow and the earthly sorrow we cause ourselves."

Singleton glanced at the pale features lighted up by the moon. Woman's face had never made them smile, nor man's laughter met a hearty response there. His creed; it had marked itself in wrinkles on his brow! "Heavens!" thought Singleton, "if he *should* be deluded—what a life his will have been!"

"Who goes there?" cried the sentry at Strada Reale Gate.

They answered, and passed through.

CHAPTER II.

Secreti loquimur. Tibi nunc, hortante Camena,
Excutienda damus præcordia.
PERSIUS, *Sat.* 5; 21, 2.

"LASH up hammocks, sir!"

Singleton felt his swinging couch vibrate as a rude hand touched the "nettles," and woke suddenly from a deep, dreamless sleep,—one of those from which we wake with a sort of wonder, and begin to fancy that death may not be so terrible after all. He had been reading till nearly daylight. He cast his languid eyes round; the cockpit was just beginning to stir into life; gentlemen were stationing themselves before their toilet apparatus on the amputation-table; queer little looking-glasses were suspended here and there, in which flickered the reflection of the yellow light of lamps; shouts were heard of "pass the word for Tomkins—pass the word for Higgs," as each riser required his marine valet. There was a splashing of water,—an odour of bear's grease,—a rattling of chest lids. One youth, with nothing on but his trousers, was standing under the hatchway, poking his head up the wind-sail to monopolize as much air as possible; a kick soon displaced *him*, we may be sure. Presently comes a thump; a cartouch-box, or perhaps even a bayonet, rattles down from the lower-deck, where the marines are cleaning their accoutrements; then a curse and a grumble; a light cloud of pipe-clay floats in the air. Anon comes a sharp pop,—it is soda-water,—the cork strikes Dalton, who is trying to shave at the risk of his life; there is a general laugh. In a short time, some dozen or so of the mids are assembled round the amputation-table; conversation begins.

"Where did you go, Harry, after the Bloakers' spread?"

"To Ricardo's." Splash, splash. "Lend me some honey-water, Charley."

"Do you d—d whelps use honey-water?" growled an old mate.

"Yes," cried Blanchard, "when one can get it good. Do you like it, Mr. Hoggles? I confess, for my part, that kalydor is absolutely necessary to my existence in this climate! It lies so fragrantly on the cheek at night,—like the breath of the beloved one! It keeps off the mosquitoes, too; I hear a mosquito now. Ah! it has bit me."

Blanchard subsided into agonized silence.

"Mr. Blanchard! the first cutter is called away," said a quartermaster, coming down the ladder; Blanchard commanded that boat, and spent a small income in keeping her nice.

"D—n and confound the first cutter," said a youngster, who had two uncles bishops, and one a dean of noted piety.

"Youngsters must not swear," said the old mate, who affected propriety, as it gave him an excuse for thrashing the youngsters.

"I'll be up directly," said Blanchard, to the quartermaster. "Bless me, where's my sponge? I had a sponge that Undine might love! Hang it, one can never get a chance of dressing like a gentleman here; I'll cut the service, and join the Guards!"

"Nice girl, the eldest Bloaker," said a youngster; "has she got any money?" (The speaker was sixteen years old.)

"Hem, hem; take care!" cried somebody. A cabin-door was observed to open stealthily; it was that of the chaplain, Mr. Mawker. Mr. Mawker used to report all impropriety to the commander, who was serious. Mr. Mawker was a divine with large lay whiskers; he had jilted ladies at almost every port in the Mediterranean, and dared scarcely land anywhere for fear of being horsewhipped by an indignant brother.

"I hate spies," cried a midshipman, in a meaning tone. Mr. Mawker's door gradually closed.

"The cutter's manned, Mr. Blanchard," cried the quartermaster, coming down again.

"It must wait,—I'm dressing," said Blanchard, furiously, and perspiring over a tight Wellington. Away went the quartermaster. Down he came again,—"You must come, sir, or the commander will send a file of marines for you, he says."

"Curse the boots,—oh, Lord!" ejaculated Blanchard. The quartermaster went on deck again. In three minutes there was a great rattling on the after ladder, and down came the sergeant of marines, with a party! Blanchard was suffering the torture of the boot;—James the Second would have enjoyed the spectacle he presented.

"Now, sir; please, sir," said the sergeant, embarrassed. "Here's your trousers, sir! be quick, please. I have orders to bring you as you are, sir." Blanchard made desperate exertions, and at last hurried on his clothes, and got away.

Fontenoy had been slowly dressing himself during this scene; he now left the cockpit and went up into the gunroom to breakfast. Oh! the luxury of a bunch of green grapes cooling in chilly water, some new bread, and a pat of fresh butter on a strawberry leaf! Such, with a cup of tea, was his morning repast. He sat at it very silently; he was languid. When he had finished, he lay down on the lockers, and leaning on his left arm, gazed at the sea. He felt a strange sensation coming on, and yet accompanied with a feeling that all was right. The sea was heaving slowly up and down before him, like a purple pall. Were the waves violets? A boat passed, painted green and yellow; the sunlight gleamed on it; it looked like a dragonfly. Who was playing music in it? By degrees the music increased, and the waves seemed to have bells in their bubbles;—bells, —bells,—bells!—and his memory grew miraculously vivid. Heatherby came before him. He remembered that on the 14th September, 1839, there was somebody to dinner; he was a little man with spectacles, who talked about the corn-laws! What made him remember him now? he had never thought of him since! He was wonderfully amused by the little man; he was so grotesque. He began to laugh,—a strange rattling laugh, —like the noise of Ivy's ebony beads.

Fontenoy was getting delirious.

Ebony beads! The waves seemed to have black beads for bubbles; up and down rose the beads; then a hand, a hot hand, seemed to pass across his brow; he resigned himself to it. It was wrapping a hot leaf round him,—a leaf from a palm-tree, reeking of sand; the sand pricked him. Oh, God!—Ivy, make them take it away! It began to go: a slow, drowsy heat came over him; the water seemed so hot that one would be afraid to bathe in it. Still his head leaned on his arm; the arm seemed to have hardened there. Fragments of old poems began to whirl through his mind,—he read them; there they were before him, in print; he would swear to the particular print. What a slow heat was destroying him!

It was the Sirocco! The sirocco wind had come; it rested on the stony island,—a glare of hot air: a wind that you would like to strike,—for which you feel a hatred as for something humanly horrible. It came like a ghost from the sandy desert, —the hell of winds. It was a wind that Œolus had sent to the desert for punishment; it came, and had absorbed the horror of a thousand leagues of sand into one soul: everything drooped; there was languor in the look of stones and rocks; the nerves of men slackened. Fontenoy lay on the cushions,—stretched in languor,—like the tongue from the mouth of a weary lion!

Presently, a change came over him. Ivy's fingers were

tapping at his temples; he thought it cruel, but that at the same time she was only in play. He found his thoughts dancing, and was improvising song. Boat after boat crossed past the ship,—full of knights of the Order of St. John! Suddenly, the water seemed wonderfully cooler; how hot he was, and how cool the water! he would try to cool himself; he laughed to think how he would revel in it; he moved.

A splash! The upper deck of the "Cleopatra" was all in confusion. "Let go the life-buoy! No,—call away a boat! Who is it? how did it happen?"

"They're picking him up, sir," said the officer of the watch to the commander.

"Send for the doctor," said the commander. "It is Mr. Fontenoy, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very strange; very strange," he said.

The boat came alongside. Fontenoy was carried on the middle-deck; his long black hair drooped across his face. They soon recovered him from the effects of the water, and he awoke,—to fever. Fever had been hovering about him for several days; it had dodged him in his walks, breathed on his sleep, lighted on him and darted off again, like a bird among trees: now it had him in fruition, in full possession.

"I think he had better be sent to the hospital, at once," said the doctor.

"Perhaps so," said the commander.

Blanchard had to take him there, with one of the assistant-surgeons, in the first cutter. The Naval Hospital of Malta is a fine building on the left side of the harbour as you enter, near Bighi Bay. They landed at a long flight of stairs; they passed in at the gate; there was a fine garden stretched at the back of the building, through which they passed. Seamen in flannel dressing-gowns and caps,—some pale, with bright staring eyes,—some limping with wounds hardly healed,—were sunning themselves there.

They passed under a colonnade at the left wing of the building, and through some passages into the midshipman's ward, a fine, spacious room enough, looking out on a colonnade facing the harbour. There were four little beds in it, each with white mosquito curtains, each screened in with a large green screen, and each with a little table for books and convenience. Two young gentlemen, in the "convalescent" state, were sprawling on sofas. They were rather glad to find that somebody had got a fever,—it was such a bore to have no company!

Fontenoy was put to bed, under the direction of the amiable

and accomplished old surgeon (Dr. W——); the "nurse" was one Beppo, a Maltese, who always had a comic grin on his face, which grew ten times more comic, in effect, when he wished to be serious; he was a good-hearted creature, Beppo, and singular enough altogether. Singleton was put to bed with every kindness.

"There de barley-water, Missa Fontenoy; you lie quiet,—you soon be well." And he chucked Singleton under the chin, and patted his cheek. Singleton gave a faint smile, and lay there, drearily counting the window-panes. Oh, those window-panes! up and down the lofty window his dreary eye ranged a hundred times a day!

"Beppo—when will we have tea?" asked one of the convalescents.

"De usual time,—not before,—you know, Missa Twigg;" and Beppo moved off.

"Bigg, what a fellow Beppo is," said Twigg.

"Yes."

They relapsed into silence; Singleton heard the long, heavy, intolerable sigh of *ennui*.

"Bigg,—what could you eat now?" asked Twigg. This was a favourite theme with the convalescent; indeed, the "half-diet," a leg of fowl with a potato, or something of that sort, was but meagre fare!

"Let me see!" said Bigg, thoughtfully. "Say a baked cod's head and shoulders: did you ever try it baked, Twigg? With oysters, I mean, and bread-crumbs—done brown—and steaming, directly the spoon goes in, like mad!"

"Or," said Twigg, "some kidneys in wine sauce; or, a beef-steak pudding—as they do 'em at the 'Cheshire Cheese,' in Fleet Street. Do you know that place?"

"Dear Fleet Street!" ejaculated Bigg. "Oh, Twigg, if you and I were walking arm-in-arm into the 'Rainbow!'"

Again there was a pause,—then they spoke in a lower tone,—they were discussing the regulation by which nothing was permitted to pass the gate without a "pass" signed by the surgeon.

"I've an idea!" said Twigg. "The old fellow never objects to letting in preserves; I'll write a pass for preserves,—he'll sign it,—we'll add the word 'meat,' and have in some preserved grouse!"

That this "dodge" was as successful as its ingenuity deserved, Singleton heard from audible sounds of mastication and chuckling, as he lay awake at night.

Meanwhile, the mess of the "Cleopatra" had gone to dinner,

—it was a "crack" mess,—they were just seated about six o'clock,—one or two fellows were glancing at the bills of fare which lay on the table. The table was adorned with wine—the decanters of which bore that grateful haze which marks that the wine is iced. Omelettes, ragouts, and fricassees of various sorts were being demolished; the light from the ports came modulated by green curtains.

"Poor Fontenoy!" said Pug Welby, feelingly. "How devilish odd!—how did it really happen?"

"I was in the gunroom," said a mate; "he jumped out."

"God bless me!—Is that turkey before you, Clarendon?—Jumped out!—delirious!"

"Hem!" said Clarendon, meaningly.

"Why, what does that mean,—that 'hem,'—anything behind the scenes?"

The speaker nodded mysteriously. "Wine, Pug?"

"With pleasure; I'll speak to you by and bye."

They wined and nodded; there were glances of mystery round the table, and everybody ate with increased emotion.

"I know something——" began a mate.

"D——d little," muttered Pug, *sotto voce*.

"About the affair of Fon?"

"Yes.—Youngster, never take a bottle by the bilge in such weather as this; who's to drink after your d——d hands have been heating it?—There was a girl in the case, for one thing."

"He has not hit it," said Clarendon to Pug, aside.

"Ah! he is eccentric. Pass the preserved pears."

So tattled the mess. But, after dinner, a select party assembled to smoke, at the bow port on the main deck; Pug was there, and Clarendon, and one or two more.

"You see," said Clarendon, puffing away, and with his white hand resting on the breeching of a gun near him, "I think it was a case of——"

"Of what?" asked Pug, eagerly, while the rest of the group stirred themselves to listen.

"Attempted suicide!"

"God bless me!" said Pug, scattering the cigar-ash on his white drill trousers as he started. "But how,—what? Who the doose would kill himself if he had any money?"

"Oh, you're making a jest of it," said Clarendon, seriously and quickly; "I tell you I'm in earnest. The fact is, there are some queer stories about Singleton. Passing over that confounded eccentricity which takes him to places and people that nobody else goes to—look, for instance, at his making such a chum of a priest——"

"And, hang it! the Roman priests ain't gentlemen, you know," struck in Bungle, a mate.

"Well, well, go on, Clarendon," said Pug, impatiently.

"It's gone out again, *peste!*" said Clarendon, looking at his cigar; "but what I was going to say is,—there is a fellow here who knows Fontenoy's dad, and all about their county. The father originally made, as was always thought, a queer match; but now, it seems it's dubious whether they were married and——"

"Whew!" went Mr. Pug Welby, with a prolonged whistle, "'nobody's son, as Chesterfield said! The world is a strange business—you never fall on your feet unless you alight on somebody else's shoulders: you must have somebody you can stick to——"

Mr. Welby stopped, and stared. Just as he spoke these last words, a stranger approached them: it was Father Adda. There was a singular contrast between the pale, decorous sombre priest, and the free-and-easy knot who were chatting and smoking before him. They all looked up in surprise, and Bungle put his tumbler to his lips, and stared over the rim of the glass at him with the most marked astonishment.

"Do I intrude, gentlemen?" said the father, bowing with much grace; "I came to see Mr. Fontenoy; is he on board?"

"Sinkly, a chair," said Welby, readily; "sit down, sir; he has had an accident, I am sorry to say."

And Welby, in a polite and rather off-hand way, told Father Adda the whole story, holding his cigar down that it might not offend him, while Bungle stared at his sacerdotal garb with much curiosity. The priest thanked him, bowed gravely again, and withdrew.

"Be sure your sins shall find you out," said Bungle, affecting a nasal snuffle, as the figure of the father disappeared.

"'Gad, mine generally find me at home," said Pug, philosophically. The group rose, and walked aft again. A party of lieutenants and ward-room men were smoking in that part of the deck between the guns, and discussing the regular subjects as usual. Captain Bulrush of the "Roarer" was among them; that remarkable brig of his had been under sailing orders for eight-and-forty hours: it was blowing a fine fresh breeze right out of the Grand Harbour, but Bulrush was waiting for his "washing" to come off.

So things were progressing on board, while Singleton lay in his bed with the fever—music playing in his brain. In the middle of the night the ward were disturbed by a deep low groaning from another part of the building. Singleton was awake, and morbidly wondered who the poor fellow was; his two comrades, Messrs. Twigg and Bigg, were snoring in their

respective beds. Then Singleton heard the snoring interrupted, and weary exclamations, then——

"Twigg, are you awake?"

"Yes."

"Cursed row—what's that cursed row?" (A growl.)

"Wish somebody would put a hot potatoe in the fellow's mouth," said Twigg. *The groaning ceased soon.* The house was very still after it.

At seven, Master Beppo made his appearance to call them.

"Tabeep* coming, genelemen," he said, announcing that the surgeon was beginning his rounds.

"Hillo, Beppo, how's Mrs. Beppo?" said Twigg.

"How Mrs. Twigg, sare?" retorted Beppo.

"You impudent fellow! But, Beppo, who was making that row last night?"

"Man called Johnson, sare; he die at two o'clock." Then Beppo put his finger on his lip, and motioned to Mr. Twigg not to make a noise, glancing aside at Fontenoy, as he did so.

Day passed after day—it was languor set to music. Little shadows of delirium crossed Singleton's brain occasionally; a constant phenomenon was the ringing of bells—terrible sound, when it is his own death-bell that the prophetic sufferer hears!

One night Singleton dreamed with peculiar and vivid distinctness of his friend Welwyn. He awoke refreshed: he reflected on the dream. Whence do these things come? If I suddenly and unexpectedly dream of a particular loved soul, is it by accident or chance? The world is full of law; it must be by some power—perhaps some divine and mysterious power, as certain and inexplicable as the influence of a star! May it not be that the loved soul is dreaming of us, or thinking of us, too, at that moment? At least, let us try and find love in our philosophy whenever we can, as the astronomer longs for and watches that famous observation in his science—the passage of Venus across the sun's disc!

Singleton was musing on such thoughts in the forenoon, when Beppo came running to the bedside. "A *padre* ask for you, sir."

There appeared round the corner of the screen Father Adda. Beppo saluted him with all his native reverence for the order; Singleton held out his hand.

"My son, this is sad; you have my prayers."

He sank upon his knees by the bedside, and remained there for some moments; when he rose, Singleton placed his hot dry hand in his. The priest gazed at him very kindly; Singleton's thoughts turned to Ivy: he began to wander—suddenly he said—

* Doctor.

"Father, you know Bokkar; near there is the place where *she* lives,—she, Miss Welwyn, must know that I am ill." He looked at Adda as he spoke, puzzled, and for a moment forgetting him; a haze succeeded: when he saw clearly again, the priest was gone

Singleton began to recover, and to creep back into health again. He left his bed; at first he used to lie on the sofa, and read a little. By degrees he began to appreciate the full benefit of Messrs. Twigg and Bigg's society: they were still "recovering"—Twigg from a musket-shot in a smart pirate skirmish on the Barbary coast; Bigg, from a shattering he had given his fingers by loading a gun, when there was an unhappy and malignant particle of fire in the barrel. He did not enjoy their society much, nor sympathise with their pursuits; they lounged about the garden of the hospital, seeking for opportunities to smoke "on the sly,"—catching lizards by the tail,—and helping themselves to the almonds before they were ripe! They carved their names on the colonnade pillars, and made havoc among the geraniums. Singleton could not enjoy these pursuits; his heart was too heavy, and his mind too full. Twigg and Bigg "chaffed" him. Singleton started with serious surprise at one of their practical jokes; they affixed a cross, ingeniously made from brown paper, on his screen. Father Adda had visited him several times. He was always studying the father's theological books: there was gathering slowly, and with increasing force in his mind, a feeling in favour of his doctrines. And if a spirit, weary with struggle and inquiry, seeks an opiate to give it repose, what Church offers one in such an ancient and splendid chalice?

CHAPTER III.

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height;
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star, upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley.

TENNYSON'S *Princess*, p. 151-2. (1st edition.)

ONE morning, my friend Singleton was informed that a large parcel had arrived for him. "This for you, sare," cried Beppo, with his usual grin. "What can it be?" said Singleton, commencing to undo the string.

"Perhaps present from some 'complished lady, sare," said Beppo, facetiously.

"Don't talk nonsense, Beppo."

"Ah, you far too sensible, Missa Fontenoy."

Singleton succeeded in removing the string from his package. It turned out to be a literary bundle—a parcel of treatises—*genus*, pamphlets, and *species*, tracts. Tracts! tracts of the *Society for*—diffusing something or other. Inside the wrapping-paper were these words:—"To Singleton Fontenoy, Esqr., with the compliments of the Reverend Mr. Grubb."

"Who is Grubb?" said Mr. Twigg, who had approached the table, and was looking over Fontenoy's shoulder.

"I know no such person," said Singleton, in a perplexed state.

He began to turn the productions over; they were Protestant polemical works, "*Down with Babylon!*" (2d.) "*Come out of Her*," &c., &c., all ferociously assaulting the Roman Catholic Church, and all to be had a few pence cheaper if you took more than a hundred copies (which you didn't!) The fact was, that a rumour had been spread that my hero was about to renounce the orthodox faith (as established by Act of Parliament). Malta is a hot-bed of religious bigotry, in which, at this period, Mr. Grubb was a prosperous fungus. Romanism and Protestantism are there always at loggerheads. One Sunday, the *Reverend* Mr. Somebody preaches on the Reformation and its blessings; instantly, an announcement appears that *Father* Somebody means soon to lecture on the Mass. The reverend preachers, and the father lecturers; meanwhile the relative numbers of each party remain as before. Mr. Grubb, one of the leaders of the Protestants, remarkable for his zeal, had heard of Father Adda's frequent visits to Fontenoy, and had sent in these tracts, which were to defend Singleton against his assaults, as sand-bags are employed against shells. They attacked the pope, personally and coarsely, as a rabble at an election burn an effigy of their own ugly construction by way of revenging themselves on an unpopular gentleman; whether the effigy be *like*, is a minor point in such cases.

Singleton put a few of them into the pocket of his dressing gown, and strolled languidly into the spacious garden to refresh himself in the sun and the sea-breeze. He was still weak, his limbs dragged heavily along: violent motion made his heart flutter in a death-like manner. He crawled over to a seat, and lolled back, looking up at the blue sky which swam above him dreamily; he reclined, and listened to the hum of insects, and watched the wagging of the flowers, which nodded to salute the passing wind. Then he pulled out some of the pamphlets, and

turned over their pages indolently; as he was doing so, Father Adda approached. Singleton coloured a little as his eye fell on them.

"Good morning; I am glad to see you, Father Adda."

"I am glad to see you out to-day; summer is rushing upon us as in a wave of beauty."

He removed his strange black priest's hat, and bared his high forehead to the wind; there was something in his look which contrasted very much at that moment with his stern garb and pale face.

"Have you been to Bokkar lately?" asked Singleton.

"Bokkar? yes! You seem to think much of that place; you spoke to me of it one day when I was here before—you were very ill then."

"Did I?" stammered Singleton, colouring a little again.

"Do you not remember what you said?" asked the priest, in a low voice.

"No."

"It was confused—of course you could not."

A little puff of wind, as he spoke, blew one of the tracts down on the grass; he stooped most attentively to pick it up, and laid it on the seat beside Fontenoy. There was a sardonic shade, light and instantaneous, across his lips at the moment. Singleton saw it, and spoke.

"I owe these tracts to a stranger's zeal: they came here about two hours ago."

The priest took one of them up; then spoke with bitter melancholy, "Free inquiry—right of private judgment! Where did these bring *you*, where have they brought others? Germany, the great country of the Reformation, has become now the greatest fountain of infidelity; where those who reject God's Mother believe in Strauss! In England, your Church has become a corporation, to which men grudge its income. My friend, my son, I tell you that, when under the influence of 'free inquiry,' a man takes up the Bible to question a faith, he places himself by that act out of the power of getting faith at all. It is egotism—look how he will, he will see only the reflection of his own small individuality."

Singleton was silent: he felt his heart beat. Gradually and gradually he had been drawn by his studies within the enchanted web of the Roman theology; his heart began to beat time with the stately march of their processions. An immortal being must have some immortal food, and cannot exist on the vulgar supplies of the world's day; and therefore it is that a curse will rest, and does rest, on the nation or state that has nothing to offer to the young but mechanical work, meanly rewarded. A

nation where the word "saint," is a nickname, which believes in no enthusiasm, which holds the religious man to be the greatest infidel of all, such a nation may enjoy the fatness of a snail, but can only expect the honour of one. If he who lives by the sword must die by the sword, so he who lives by the "till" shall die by the "till,"—die to great ideas, and die to pure faith. Every human being above the class who seem born without souls, or born spiritually blind, finds the necessity of a divine belief. If none such be inspired by those about him, or inhaled from some noble example at hand, he grows up vague and discontented; perhaps takes to the nearest mumbo-jumbo, or gets whirled into an unhealthy cloud of mysticism, through which what natural light is in him beams dimly and unprofitably.

Singleton raised himself upon his arm. "Even so!" he said, looking up at Father Adda's face. "For some time the thought of your religion has lain continually on my breast, as its symbol does on one that is very dear to me!"

The father looked grave. "Once for all, son," he said, "beware how you mistake vulgar light of earth for light from heaven."

Singleton paused, rather startled, particularly by Father Adda's manner.

"The convert who alone is a true convert, and worthy of the Church's bosom, is the holy enthusiast. He must have no particle of selfishness——"

"Selfishness!" exclaimed Singleton.

"He must be ready to make sacrifices! 'Tis the religion of sacrifice; 'tis the worship of sorrow. It was in persecution and misery that our Church was founded; its enemies could not see its purity through its blood that they shed, and which blinded them."

"I had a friend," said Singleton, plucking a handful of flowers and flinging them wantonly in the air, "who regarded all churches as so many temporary forms of one worship—forms of one Eternal Spirit——"

"Ah!" exclaimed the priest—"Welwyn!"

"Welwyn! and you know *him?*" said Singleton, sitting up, and gazing eagerly in his face.

"He is of our Church — or, nominally so—but right of private judgment has made him a dreamer without a hope! Ask your own heart if any belief in metaphysical abstractions—if any 'principles'—so derived—can equal in their effect my stable and heart-held faith in a personal God, and a communion of saints, and all our creed. These 'philosophical' dreams are very well in the study; carry them to your loved one's grave, and see how they will console you there!"

Singleton sank back. "You have spoken well. It is true. I feel that a man gains quite infinitely even in believing the one article of Prayers for the Dead."

"May you be guided to a humble faith in all!"

"But stop," said Fontenoy; "you know Welwyn; you know, then, I suppose, that I am his relation?"

"I do," said Father Adda, quietly.

"You know his sister?" said Singleton.

"Yes."

"Sweet Ivy!" exclaimed Singleton. "The thought of her brings life to my languid being."

A slight flush of colour crossed the priest's brow. Outlaw of human emotion—was it that the ghost of a passion passed across him? We may kill the emotions, but their shades will haunt us.

Again Singleton rose up, and began to walk about with the father. Father Adda was agitated,

"You are fond of her?" he said. "Of course! she is your relation!"

"I am fond of her, for she is my life!" said Singleton.

"The more glorious the sacrifice," replied the priest, calmly.

"The sacrifice, — the — what? Speak plainly to me now, father, pray!"

"Well—so be it! She enters the Sisters of St. Agnes, and devotes her life to God!"

Singleton laughed, and choked a little. "*I* will ask her that, *mi pater!*"

"Do! Enthusiast for religion are you? Oh, youth, how skin-deep that faith must be which can sacrifice nothing."

Singleton was staggered, and paused. "Well, I will struggle for the right."

"And now," said the priest, who saw that the tears were rising in the youth's eyes (and, perhaps, remembered what is laid down in one of Cicero's treatises on rhetoric, that *lacrymâ nil citius arescit*), "I must go. I shall see you again.'

"Your blessing?"

"Willingly."

He gave it, and Singleton saw his dark figure departing down the garden-walk. He turned and wandered into the quadrangle. "I shall never recover," he thought, "with all this agitation. And now for a glimpse at the Mediterranean!"

He then strolled away in front of the building to the height that looked into the Grand Harbour. The fortifications glittered white in the sunlight opposite; the wind was blowing fresh into the harbour, and the fair-way buoy was bobbing up and down like a swinging cherry. The Marina was lined with *speronari*

and English and foreign craft. The luxury of nature, after we have been pestered with thought, is irresistible. Singleton revelled in it, and longed for some active work, — something to do!

Twigg came up to him at this moment. For the first time since he had had the honour of his acquaintance, he experienced decided pleasure at his approach.

"Well, Twigg, any news?"

"News!" said the youth, shrugging his shoulders in a melancholy manner. "There's been nothing but a vessel signalled from the Palace; but *she* won't come in; not she! Of course not. It would be something to amuse us poor devils, and she won't."

"Where is Bigg?"

"He! Oh, he's gone to sleep, lucky fellow. Beppo's eating olives. Could not we find something to amuse us?"

As he spoke, the sound of a gun was heard. They both looked to the mouth of the harbour, and there was a man-of-war brig in sight. She had just rounded the corner from the northward, and was saluting the admiral; she came tripping along, with all sail set.

"What brig is that?" inquired Singleton.

Twigg looked at her. Gradually his face assumed a ludicrous degree of horror. "By Jove, it's us; its our brig!"

"What?"

"The 'Sybarite,' 10," answered Twigg, ruefully. "She's a'ell afloat! Old Relden, the lieutenant in command, is a Tartar. Two men hanged themselves off Galita; and there's never anything to eat in the mess!"

Bigg joined them, and presently chimed in with his messmate's complaint. The horror of these youths was something wonderful: they foresaw an immediate discharge, for their wounds were now well. Indeed, they rather regretted their recovery! for Dr. W——, the surgeon, was so kind and gentlemanly, and the hospital was such a comfortable place for indolent leisure, that they dreaded going back to work and discomfort afloat; and it may be affirmed that they were right. The Naval Hospital, with such officials as Dr. W. and his assistant-surgeons, Drs. N. and S. W. (the last-named, one of the most accomplished men in the profession), had a value as a place of abode irrespective of its special qualities. Many a naval man read and reflected, and benefited morally there, to a degree far beyond his progress on board his ship. "Reprobates" took to intellectual amusements,—Higsby to chess,—and Snigsby to the French grammar.

The "Sybarite" glided along. Presently the top-gallant sails and royals shrivelled up and struggled in the wind; then her

masts beamed out as the canvass was taken off her, like figures from which the drapery has fallen. The men swarmed aloft, and the sails disappeared in the furling as leaves before a blight of insects.

"There goes the old Syb!" said Twigg, shaking his head.

"Many a glass of grog you and I have had on board her," said Bigg, in a moralizing tone.

"I wonder what Relden's about now?"

"D——g somebody's eyes," Bigg said, calmly.

"Tea, genelmen," said Beppo.

They went off just as the "Sybarite" was comfortably posted at a buoy, to their room. Beppo produced the tea; soon afterwards the doctor's rounds began.

The doctor came to Singleton in his turn—felt his pulse, and looked in his face.

"You are getting round fast, Mr. Fontenoy, but you must not excite yourself; is there anything on your mind that excites you?"

Singleton hesitated: two little spots of colour dawned on his cheeks. The doctor drew him aside.

"Hem! Mr. Fontenoy, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, sir, I shall be happy to answer it."

"Have you become a member of the Roman Church?"

"No, I have not—not now, certainly," answered Singleton, taken aback.

The doctor took snuff. "I thought not," he said; "however, let me tell you it was so asserted by a priest to a person of my acquaintance—it was asserted by Father Tallotti. He said that you had been baptized, and had confessed. I will contradict it."

The doctor went away shortly afterwards; Singleton wondered who could have made the false assertion. Father Adda was incapable of falsehood, certainly: but who could have told this Father Tallotti anything of the sort? He sickened at the idea of being played off as a tool by a faction.

At sunset he went again into the garden, and walking in solitude, had a long meditation on his past life; he thought of the attachments he had formed before the one which now engrossed him. Every true lover has these little loves before the great one comes; they are like those pretty pieces of carved wood which Columbus found floating in the Atlantic, forerunners and signs that he was drawing near his great goal, and approaching the end of his wanderings across the Ocean.

He returned inside, and then sat down, and with the fresh sweetness of the summer night still lingering about his senses, wrote the following note:—

"To Ivy.

"Dearest Ivy,

"Do you wonder that I have not come to see you? I have been ill—I am still weak; but write to me, and make me well,—lift me with your gentle hand from the brink of the grave.

"I have felt this evening unusually happy; I know—I feel, that it is well with you. Write to me, Ivy; my heart beats at the thought of you, as a bell that rings for prayer.

"Father Adda has been with me to-day; I have spoken to him of you—he knows you. Is *he* then the confessor whom you have mentioned to me? He talked of the Sisters of St. Agnes. Ivy, ask your own heart *if you love St. Agnes as much as you do me?*

"You have said that it was your *duty* to sacrifice yourself; what impulse *can* be diviner than attachment? Heaven is holier than a temple! The fairest objects can only reflect something from above. Dearest Ivy, what would even your beautiful blue eyes be, if there was *no light?*—Yours, ever and ever,

"Singleton."

He folded the note up, and sealed it, and then consulted the faithful Beppo how a messenger could be found to take it to Bokkar. Beppo procured one, and it was sent.

A few days passed, and there was no answer; Father Adda did not visit him. He heard no news from the "Cleopatra;" he began to be weighed upon by a sense of impending ill-fortune. Thanks to his youth and strength, he had shaken off the fever, and his mind now marched forward out of its shadow: he felt that eager longing for action natural to bold youth, when the pulses beat like a hammer, and the sea-breeze brings the wild rose flying to the cheek, and the spirit feels that desire to bound into stormy work—that longing to leap which is inspired in a wild being by the sight of a stormy wave!

It was a beautiful morning: Singleton was discharged from the hospital. He took a boat at the stairs, and in a few minutes was gliding along the Grand Harbour; in the centre of it a steamer, obviously just arrived, was lying, hissing away her angry breath in a white column. Boats were swarming round her; a white union-jack, the signal for a midshipman, flew saucily out from the "Cleopatra's" peak. The Maltese boats, with white awnings spread, laboured along the water; the harbour was all alive with the noise of boatswains' pipes, bells, shouts, and the laughter of divers.

When he reached the "Cleopatra," he found many officers walking about on deck. Singleton stared round him. The first

person whose eye he met was Toadyley (brother of Toadyley of the "Patagonian,"—they are a numerous family)—who was mate of the upper deck. He was moving smartly fore and aft, bullying the after-guard, peering at the hammocks, &c., as usual.

"Hillo, Toadyley!"

"Oh, Fontenoy! how are you?—back."

Mr. Toadyley spoke without cordiality, and hurried off to see to some work or other. "Now," thought Singleton, "I *know* that I am in bad odour with the 'authorities' for something or other."

Indeed, Mr. Toadyley was a type of a class we find everywhere, who are walking indexes of the amount of current snobbism or meanness. You know how you stand with the bigoted and servile and all their family, by the exact degree of civility you meet with from these poor eye-servers. But not only are they thus serviceable: they serve to show you how you are getting on in the world; if they stop and flatter you, be of good cheer—you are mounting the world's ladder. Do they nod and grimace, you have made a little hit. A man can't climb a tree without getting his clothes rubbed—the flattery of the Toadyleys is the necessary dirt; they are wonderfully useful.

Singleton walked aft, and reported himself to the commander. Under the poop, three or four of the clerks were sorting the squadron's letters, which had just arrived in the steamer; white leather bags discharged their contents—a voluminous mass of letters dotted with black and red wax, papers in brown wrappers, &c. As Singleton reached them, the clerk said, "You're just in time!" and handed him a bundle.

He withdrew between the guns; there was the familiar aspect of the county paper, a letter in a strange, business-looking style, and one from Welwyn, in his large and fine handwriting, like a masculine woman's. But he looked in vain for the Fontenoy crest: it was now a considerable time since he had heard from his father—he was beginning to be seriously alarmed about it. He did not like the aspect of the strange letter: altogether he made a singular resolution—he would go on shore, and read his correspondence quietly in the country. Reader, be wise,—if you have a misery, take it out of town, air it in the fresh breeze, let it lose itself in the woods—drown it in the river. If you are poor, go out of town to be poor; you can wear rags without a blush, only in the sight of God!

So Fontenoy got leave to go on shore, took with him an Elzevir, as in former days, and landing on the Marina, passed that way out of the gates of the town.

He lay for some time on the grass, in a garden at one of the little villages of Malta. Presently he got up, seated himself at

a table under an awning of the inn, sipped some lemonade, and opened the letters.

He rose up, with the blood thumping in his temples, and the summer spinning before his eyes! He had learned all—all that Welwyn had heard from his father, as we recorded it at the time; learned that terrible news from another quarter, also; learned, that he stood there,—he, Singleton Fontenoy,—under the Southern sun, the penniless child of disgrace!

And there was an astonishing paragraph in the newspaper,—a paragraph that made Singleton stare at it, wondering if he was actually reading the English tongue.

It would be a pity to mutilate it; here it is, entire:—

"MARRIAGES.

"On the ——th instant, at St. Peter's, Cheltenham, by the Reverend Fletcher Brown, John Singleton Fontenoy, Esq., of Heatherby, to Priscilla, relict of the late Lieutenant-Colonel Harcher, C.B., of the 2nd Timbuctoo Dragoons."

CHAPTER IV.

Sem. What is life?
'Tis not to stalk about and draw fresh air,
From time to time, or gaze upon the sun—
'Tis to be free.

ADDISON'S *Cato*, Act 2nd.

HE rose up from his seat, and left the house. Nothing could give his mind relief but violent motion. This was, indeed, a crisis! he thanked God that there was no one there to see him blushing. Truly it would be a fine story, for those who loved scandal, that Singleton Fontenoy,—he who prided himself on his lineage, and smacked of the fine gentleman, was a bastard! He dwelt on the word with a curious interest,—on the word itself, in all its offensiveness,—with that sort of interest which takes people to see executions and other horrors. Now, it began to be plain to him why he had heard no mention of his mother! People don't like to allude to their youthful follies. Doubtless she had been a pretty girl, and there was an end of it. The subject presented itself to his mind in a hundred aspects.

First of all, here was a very good reason why his father and he had never heartily sympathised. Mr. Fontenoy, though he had first adopted him,—perhaps from some impulse of remorse, could of course not be expected to look with all the interest of a father on a youth who could not succeed to the family estates; he was not the kind of man. Then how natural that he should have sent him to sea, where he was out of the way! And of course the marriage had clinched it! He was now an outlaw, and virtually an exile; and, apparently, the best thing he could do was to go

to Algiers, and join the French army. He could trade in his blood!—and as for Ivy!—but when he thought of her he was fairly beaten, and he sobbed aloud.

Then a sudden reaction took place in his feelings. Son, or bastard, or whatever he was, he had a soul, and was born a free inheritor of the glories of creation. All these regrets were the pangs of wounded vanity and folly. He would stand upon his own individuality, and face the world by his proper power.

In this frame of mind he entered Valetta in the evening. As he walked down Strada Reale, he saw the figure of Father Adda before him. It suddenly struck him that the father must know something of that strange, confused web of family history in which he had been imprisoned so long. He came up behind him, and tapped him on the shoulder; Father Adda turned sharply round.

"Good evening, father! It is a fine evening. I have something to say to you!"

The priest, as he fancied, seemed somewhat embarrassed. *He, too*, had heard the news, thought Singleton, and cared little about a convert with no broad lands.

"Good evening, my son."

"Turn down this way, please," said Singleton, taking his arm at the corner of a street, at the end of which gleamed a patch of sea.

"I have some duty——" began Adda.

"The duty to the poor is imperative," said Singleton, drily. "One word." They turned the corner. "I am anxious, and weary; my heart is languid, and my head hot; you will pardon my abruptness, therefore. What I have to say is this. You know the Welwyns; you know they are my relations. I ask you simply,—do you know anything of my mother?" He coloured a little as he spoke the last words.

"Much,—all! but, stay, Mr. Fontenoy; come to me, to-morrow! I have duty now." He glanced round, with embarrassment, again. In his excited mood my hero pressed him beyond the borders of his usual courtesy.

"Father Adda; I have had a shameful letter. You will scarcely believe it, but I am told that I—I—am not my father's legitimate son!"

Father Adda started with unfeigned astonishment. "Pshaw, Mr. Fontenoy!" Then he paused; his eyes brightened for an instant, and he resumed. "I see! The motive of this assertion is obvious: they grudge the lands of Heatherby——"

"Heatherby! Then you know——"

The father's countenance changed. He went on. "Know! —'tis my business to know! But time is short. They grudge the lands of Heatherby to one who aspires to submit himself to the Old Church,—the Cybele of Religions!"

Singleton's lip curled. "Mighty Mother—would she dirty her fingers with the soil!"

Adda winced. "Come; these sneers are not you. But wait till to-morrow! I must go now! the wind rises——"

"The wind rises!" exclaimed Singleton; "and what is the wind to you?" One flash of light suddenly dazzled his mind; —this haste of the priest's had some reference to Ivy!

"Good day," said Adda, and moved away. "What! Mr. Fontenoy, do you follow me?"

"Yes," said the youth, doggedly, "our fates are bound together; I follow—go on."

"Then," said the priest, stopping short, "then you call down a malediction, and may——"

As he spoke, with the air of one who raises and poises a weapon, a third person joined them: it was a friend of Singleton's—Julian Linley, who was now staying at Malta, *en route* to the East. He absorbed Singleton's attention for the moment, and in that moment the father disappeared.

"Why, he's gone," exclaimed Singleton.

"Well," said Julian, drawing his arm round Singleton's, "well, let him go. His Church is going!"

His gay laugh—musical enough for one to dance to—made Singleton start, and look confused—

"The world's dread laugh,
That scarce the stern philosopher can brave,"

is more impressive, more potent than a funeral bell. Let any one come fresh from an idealist's writings into a drawing-room full of people; how stable and strong everything looks, when the whole universe a minute before seemed a kind of dream! Singleton felt strangely troubled, and half his aspirations, and even his sorrows trembled, and seemed ready for flight at the sound.

"You are mopish,—*frons læta parum*," said Julian; "come, I have passed through these strange humours. To-night I wish you to come with me to a 'reception,' the most original and select in the island: there will be men of fame and learning there —will you come?"

"Yes," said Singleton, decidedly; "yes."

The Baron —— that night had a drawing-room full of great people and strange people. A veteran diplomatist about to proceed to the Brazils as Minister from the Court of Portugal was there, so subtle and so gentlemanly. He was the most plausible of Ultra-Tories, and prepared to demonstrate that the serfs of Russia were the happiest plebeians in the world. Nicolas, he said, was the father of his people,—not a compliment, thought Singleton, if he resembled some parents. Near him was a traveller from Mesopotamia, and goodness knows where, who

had lived among ruins for years, domesticated like a lizard. There was there also one of the most distinguished of Irishmen, the wittiest of scholars, and the most scholastic of wits—Praxis, —with libraries in his head, and comedy on his tongue. He knew theology as well as a bishop, and in translating Horace, rivalled even the graceful and lively Bon Gaultier. The Democritus of travellers moved conspicuous in the company; he was then resting at Malta, in the course of those travels which, as recorded by his pen, were one long line of pleasant light.

Singleton was peering in at a cabinet where there was a collection of medals, when Julian came up to him, accompanied by a tall man of most intellectual aspect. Julian mentioned his name, and Singleton instantly recognised before him a crack scholar and writer, one of those dangerous and dexterous critics and wits whose pens are arrows—whose laughter shakes thrones! Next to meeting the maiden whom we love, the most delightful human pleasure is meeting the great man we reverence. Singleton was flattered and dazzled: he blushed and stammered. The great man put him quite at his ease with a few sentences; he was not the kind of person who began displaying his talents at once like a peacock spreading his tail, as some people do.

They talked for some time, and presently lighted on the subject of the Roman Church.

"So you were nearly a convert, Linley tells me?"

Were! Singleton felt awkward; he said that he certainly had changed his views about it very much since he had been studying some works on the subject.

"Ah, they showed you the necessity of a rule of faith, gave you a dose of Wiseman and Milner preparatory to Bossuet and Bellarmine; showed you a papal tree, with every pope since St. Peter."

"Yes," said Singleton.

"They demonstrated—I suppose you have not dipped into Baronius?—the falsity of the story of Pope Joan: proved they had been misrepresented and calumniated, that they did not kill so many people, and that the last religious executions in England were by Protestants."

Singleton nodded, and felt inclined to smile. The speaker took an ice from a tray handed by the servant at that moment, and partaking of it with gusto, continued—

"Did you make an excursion among the fathers?"—

"He prefers the daughters, I fancy," broke in Mr. Julian Linley, facetiously.

"*Tace improbe!* Well, the æsthetic influence came in to back the polemics. You were enchanted by the antiquity, the beauty

of the establishment, its splendid illustration by the arts. Oh, these wonderful pretty faces of ladies who were mistresses in private life, and became virgins on canvass! *Enfin*, had you really sufficient reasons given you to induce you to step back across two centuries, and reject a religion under which England has become one of the most prosperous countries in the world?"—

Something called away the speaker, and Singleton was again left by himself. He mused in a drowsy *nil admirari* manner. Presently the same distinguished gentleman passed near him again, and asked him if he had seen any of the works of Carlyle?

"No, not any," answered Fontenoy.

"Read Carlyle, and see what you think of things in general, then."

Singleton was once more left by himself. This time he observed an old gentleman, who appeared like a doctor, watching him very curiously. Who could it be? The old gentleman crossed over to him; he seemed somewhat feeble: he was very aged, and his bald head shone like a nautilus shell. He came up to Singleton, and asked his name. Singleton answered him.

"Turn your head a little that way, my young friend."

Singleton obeyed with increased surprise. The old man took off his spectacles, wiped them—put them on again.

"Your mother, my young friend, she was not English—not of English name?"

Singleton's face grew hot. "No, I think not!"

"Her name was Adda?"

Singleton started back, and his voice faltered. The conversation with Welwyn, and Welwyn's story, and the mention by him of the A —— family rushed to his mind. Now, at last, he fancied he saw all!

"I think—that is—yes," he answered. Strange to say, the old man seemed scarcely less moved, particularly as he said that he too knew her long ago!

A servant came in at that moment, and approached the old gentleman. "His Excellency's carriage is ready!"

He started, and feebly stammering to Singleton to come to him next day, bowed vaguely to the company, and departed.

"Julian!" said Singleton.

"Well, what's the matter, man,—have you seen a ghost?"

"Who—who was that old gentleman here just now?"

"Don't you know? The Cardinal Pira—one of the most distinguished scholars in Europe; thirty years ago he was a poor priest in this island—and as obscure as you or I."

"Let us come away: my head aches."

CHAPTER V.

O tell her, swallow, that thy brood is flown;
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.
The Princess, p. 70.

The ocean (that kindly mother of the unfortunate) opened her arms to receive him.

FIELDING, *Tom Jones*.

NEXT morning at daylight the hands were turned up to exercise. "Hands loose sails." The whole squadron were on the alert,—men were seen hopping up the masts like wood-peckers. The commander took his station on the poop. There was a pause, and silence, and the men crowded to the bulwarks, waiting for the order to "man the rigging." The midshipmen of the tops took advantage of the period to run up first,—it is not pleasant to have a huge fellow climbing over you, and treading on your fingers with his bare horny feet! That was all well enough for Benbow and Jervis—but it won't do for the Strawberrys, the Dulcimers, and the Welbys of our more civilized day!

The commander glanced round the other ships of the squadron, to see fair play in the race; the signal officer turned his glass on them. "There's some fellows in the 'Jupiter's' tops, sir," he said.

"Signal 'clear tops!'" said the commander. In a few minutes up flew the balls—out blew the flags. That was a snub for the squadron, and relished accordingly.

Men were observed coming down the rigging in most of the ships.

"What's the 'Orson' about?"

"She has loosed sails, sir."

So she had! Poor Captain Gunne, of the "Orson," being in a confused state of mind, had loosed sails before the time, and was ordered to furl again forthwith—to the intense amusement of the squadron.

"Man the rigging.—'Way aloft!"

The shrouds throbbed like nerves,—away went the men,—the tops grew black with figures.

"Trice up." Up go the studding-sail booms, looking as clean as peeled almonds.

"Lay out." The men swarm along the yards, and the foot-ropes dance under them. Meanwhile, you hear through the silence of the vast work the shrill, squeaking voices of "youngsters" in the tops, giving orders, with a noise like penny trumpets.

"Let fall." Down drop the sails. Then there is a "pipe down," and the men come thumping down the rigging again, leaving the sails drooping in graceful folds.

The commander kept pacing the poop as before, when he abruptly stopped. "What is that signal up at the Palace?"

The signal officer started—he had not seen it. He turned his glass on it. "*Brig in distress off the harbour's mouth.*"

"Call away the pinnace and second cutter. Main-top there; Mr. Welby, come down. Mizen-top there; Mr. Fontenoy, come down." Fontenoy and Pug came tripping down the rigging like rope-dancers; Fontenoy came quickest,—Pug being of opinion (contrary, by the way, to the commander's ideas on the subject) that a certain dignified moderation of pace was becoming in an officer.

The pinnace was manned, and taken charge of by Pug—the cutter by Fontenoy. They shoved off, with orders to see what was the matter with the brig, and to offer her assistance.

"Give way," they both cried, and the boats slashed along, abreast, down the middle of the harbour.

"Fontenoy," said Welby, "what can be the matter with her here? The weather ain't so very bad." Indeed, it was a fine moderate breeze enough.

"Goodness knows," answered Singleton.

"Distress," growled Welby, who was not over pleased at being bored with such a job. "I suppose the fellow's liquor is all out."

The boats shot past the "fair-way" buoy, and Singleton rose in the stern-sheets to look round.

"There she is, sir!" said his coxswain quickly, and pointing with his finger.

There, sure enough was a brig—a common-looking English brig, with a dirty white stripe. Her topmasts were snapped off, just above the caps, where appeared only their ragged stumps; she had had a smash on the larboard bow apparently, for some of the bulwark that had been knocked away was hanging by a few fibres, and showed a white wound.

"There's a picture!" cried Welby, with disgust. "Give way, men."

The boats bounded forward. The pinnace went alongside her on the starboard side, the cutter on the other,—and Singleton and Welby reached the deck at the same moment.

"Come on board—half the pinnace's crew," cried Welby, putting his head over the gangway. The men jumped up. The little skipper, a small, demure man, with a knowing eye—one of the cunning crew who delight "serious" owners by staying, when on shore, at Sailors' Homes, listening to Marine Missionaries, and singing doggrel hymns in the cable tier,—touched his hat to Welby.

"Why—how the devil did you get into this plight?" said Welby, looking round. "Coxswain, take the brig's helm,—put her before the wind. Now, hands get out the spare topmasts, —mast-ropes up to send the stumps down. What, is there a leak, too?"

The brig's men were working away at the pumps,—some of the boats' crew were put to them: work was set going with man-of-war promptitude.

"You can't go to sea, now," said Welby to the skipper.

"Oh,—I hope so, sir!" As he spoke, he backed against the stanchions of his cabin-ladder, placing himself between Welby and the descent.

"Pshaw, man; do you think we are going with you to—— where are you going?"

"To Palermo."

"To Palermo! You must put in to refit again."

The little skipper turned pale, and looked uneasy.

Welby moved forward, and urged the men who were at the pumps; the broken topmasts were sent dangling down, and spare ones put in a fair way of being run up. He came back to where the skipper was still standing: "You had better come forward with me and look at the bulwarks."

"Yes, sir,—oh, yes," he said in a flurried way.

"The brig got run into last night, did she?"

"Yes, sir. We left the harbour at sunset; the wind was contrary. Middle o' the night a man-of-war brig was standing across our bows, and tacked just before she reached us; she had too much way on, and so just thumped us, while she was in stays."

"Ah!—the 'Roarer,' I suppose," muttered Welby. He moved again to go forward, but, looking back, saw the skipper still standing by his cabin-ladder.

"Come on, man,—what are you waiting for?"

Again the skipper appeared agitated, but he moved this time, and went shuffling forward. "A nasty piece of business," said Welby, looking at the effects of the smash. "Sharp there, with the fore-topmast;—boats ahead to tow."

Half of each boat's crew got into the boats, and pulled ahead.

"Singleton!" cried Welby. He ran aft, and found Singleton standing near the cabin skylight.

"What is the matter, in Heaven's name, Fontenoy?"

Singleton made a gesture like a startled tiger, and bounded to the after-ladder; at the same instant the captain of the brig came running aft. "You can't go down,—you must not go down!" and flinging himself before him, opposed his passage.

"What does this mean?" asked Welby, in astonishment.

"I heard a voice below, just now," said Singleton. "Answer me this,—you have a passenger on board—a lady?"

"What is that to you?"

"Let me pass!"

"You shan't."

"Fool! I wear a sword."

His arm moved,—there was a gleam like white lightning. The terrified skipper flung himself, in a round ball—like a hedgehog—down his own stairs; he thundered against the cabin-door, and there was a cry from inside—the voice of Ivy!

Singleton stood upright and calm (Welby remembered his look long after the Maltese circles had ceased to tattle about the strange career of the Enthusiast), and said, "You take the brig in:—I accomplish my destiny."

He stalked down the ladder, burst open the cabin-door, and there was Ivy! The brig's captain picked himself up, and went on deck again. There was a trampling and thumping overhead, as the work went on; and the youth and maiden were left alone.

Singleton threw his sword down on the deck.

"So you would have left me, Ivy,—without a word of farewell! I did not expect it.—You have a heart!"

The light from the miserable skylight of the brig's cabin showed how pale Ivy's features were; and under those deep, deep blue eyes—eyes which, in the dark South, are as refreshing to see as sky to the captive,—was a shade like the shade of a leaf. Ah, Singleton, it did not become you to reproach one who had suffered so much, and so purely!

"You received my letter, did you not?"

She pulled it from her bosom.

"There! I would not have kept it,—but I thought I might, as I was not to see you again."

She sank back upon a sofa in the cabin, which had been in various ways adorned for her, as Singleton saw on glancing round.

He sat down on the deck at her feet, and kissed her hand. "It was Father Adda who arranged your departure; you were going to Sicily! I have been very miserable, Ivy,—but I see hope dawning; the ship is going back to the harbour. Fate has caused this delay. Promise—say, Ivy—that you will not go away from the island again, but as mine! Renounce the cursed soul-prison to which they would persuade you; worship with a happy being, and a joyous loving soul! The little bird that flies nearest heaven is the gayest in its song!"

She was silent, but her bosom heaved in a wave of love and tenderness.

(Meanwhile, the noise went on, on deck. The vessel heeled under a breeze,—there was a rattling of ropes and spars.)

Singleton looked up at her face as he knelt. Her fingers blushed at his loving touch! Suddenly he clasped her to his breast. "You are mine, Ivy, for ever; your heart cannot say no. Do not sin!" She rose up proudly. "To disobey the heart, *that* is the worst sin!" continued Singleton.

She stooped and deliberately kissed him on the forehead. Like the seal of the angel in the "Revelations," that kiss made him a holy servant for ever.

Then, they sat and murmured to each other like leaves on a tree in summer.

Ivy's form trembled with a sudden violent coughing.

Singleton started to his feet. At the door there entered a spectre—a long grey volume of vapour, like the rising of the genii in the "Arabian Nights;" at the same moment the skylight above them shivered, and the glass hailed down in a tempest.

"Singleton!" roared Welby; "*fire!*"

"Ivy, come,—you are mine. I can face anything *now*."

They bounded on deck together. The brig had caught fire; she was a mile from the harbour, and the wind had set off the land. There were some casks of turpentine on the forecastle,—one of them had got spilt,—fire caught it, and away went a living stream of it, hissing—blackening the deck—splashing into the sea.

Welby jumped up on the bulwarks, holding by the topmast back-stays. "Singleton, look after the girl! Leave the rest to me. Cutter and pinnace come alongside! Haul up the courses!"

Welby was quite cool. It is always the way with dandies, idlers, and all the genus. Why should we grudge a man his betting and billiards, if he is equally ready for tempest and war?

Singleton stood with Ivy at the starboard-quarter, between her and the smoke, which was drifting in hot flakes aft. "Be composed, dear. One minute, and the boat——" Ivy stood in a petrified calm, like a torrent frozen in the leap. Meanwhile, the brig's crew were galloping desperately fore and aft, seizing things and dropping them again in terror. The skipper staggered backwards and forwards like a man in a fit; and the fire cracked along below the deck, like the running of innumerable rats. The smoke rose thicker and thicker. Even in that moment, Singleton had calmness to see that spectators were gathering in Forts Elmo and Ricasoli, on both sides of the harbour, to see the spectacle,—the nautical *auto-da-fé*.

"Cutter under the quarter!"

Singleton lifted up Ivy like a baby, clambered on to the

bulwarks with her; the coxswain seized her,—"Now, marm!" he cried, and in another minute she was, half-fainting, in the cutter's stern-sheets.

"Shove off, never mind me!" cried Singleton.

"Go, Singleton," cried Welby. "To the boats, everybody! *The fire wins!*"

There was a thick, pestiferous, heavy smoke now, and the fire began to roar. The masts lighted like candles. Splash after splash was heard of men jumping overboard. Singleton bounded into the cutter. Last of all, Welby leapt into the pinnace. The men in the water were picked up; the heavily-crammed boats pulled slowly away from the burning wreck.

"A pretty d—d morning's work," said one of the pinnace's crew.

"Silence, fore-and-aft," cried Welby. "Skipper," he added, slapping the little man who was in the boat with him, with his head between his knees, on the shoulder, "look at the brig; you won't see her any more!"

There she was, to leeward of them, tossing in the sea, and writhing like a tortured snake. The flames soared, glittering up the masts, which fell bit by bit; the sea all round her hissed sadly; then,—she collapsed into charred timber, and was scattered upon the streaming waters.

"Cheer up, old fellow," said Welby, to the skipper, "you ain't the owner, I suppose."

"The Lord ish a man o' war!" muttered the skipper, incoherently, while a laugh ran through the boat's crew. The skipper was drunk. A tremendous pull at a brandy-bottle when the fire was discovered, had settled *him*.

"Give way!" cried Pug Welby, relapsing into his old *insouciance*. "D—n it, I'm getting peckish!" he muttered. "Give way, men."

They were met at the mouth of the harbour by several of the squadron's boats, which were hurrying to their relief. Singleton went with Ivy into the first cutter of the "Jupiter," the midshipman of which was a friend of his, and asked him to land them at Valetta. He left his own boat to return without him to the "Cleopatra."

When they landed, Singleton took Ivy to an hotel, where he was known; there proper attention was paid to her. He left her alone in a suite of rooms, and sallied out. It was a morning when years seemed crowded into an hour!—years of work he had to do,—for he was now in the crisis of his fortune,—and that day was the heart of his life.

He first sought out the old lady who had lived with Ivy as guardian, and who was to have followed her in the next vessel

to Palermo, where Ivy was to have taken the veil. He sent her to the hotel.

Then his next work was to keep his appointment with Cardinal Pira. One hour he was there: and as he passed out of the portals of the courtyard, his eye was bright with pride, and his tread seemed the echo of power. Turning the corner, who should he stumble against but—Father Adda! The calm mild look of the priest showed a night spent in study and devotion—a morning, ignorant of all that had made it a morning for the youth before him. He accosted Singleton most kindly.

"Well, father, good day. I am afraid I was hasty last night. Your pardon!"

"Granted willingly. I can imagine your feelings."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. You were no doubt agitated by what you had heard. Now, I think that a satisfactory process——"

"Enough. I will not trouble you. No, my *dear relation*." The priest started, and his brow was shaded with a touch of colour. "I am not ashamed of the blood of *Adda*. Now I know why I am somewhat warmer than my brethren of the North; why sometimes my veins seem to run wine!"

"Well, you forgive me my secrecy."

"I forgive you all, *now*. Join me at the —— Hotel, in an hour! But, father, father, see!"

Father Adda turned abruptly, and saw before him the captain of the brig that had perished in the fire!

Fontenoy returned on board the "Cleopatra" at six o'clock that evening. Everybody stared at him.

"Fontenoy, you're in for it."

"Fontenoy, you're in a frightful row."

"Who is she, Fontenoy?"

"Fontenoy, when are you going to be baptized?"

"I wonder he don't blush to be called Fontenoy, when he knows what we know," whispered Toadyley.

"He owes Mordecai two hundred," returned Snobby.

"Steward," said Singleton, "some hock and Seltzer-water."

"The service is going to the devil," said Toadyley, in a marked tone.

"That's lucky for you: he'll likely promote you when it gets there," said Singleton, dipping into the beverage. There was a laugh.

"Mr. Fontenoy wanted." It was the quartermaster's familiar voice.

Fontenoy went on deck accordingly. He found himself brought before the captain,—old Ricksby,—the commander,—and a clerk, ready to take notes. *That* smacked of a court-

martial; gun fired at 8 P.M.; union-jack at the peak; captains in full-dress; and ignorance and bigotry stark naked!

To be brief, he found himself charged with neglecting his duty in not coming on board in the cutter, and with "insubordination," which means, generally, that the offender has shown a disposition to resent offensive insolence from some harsh superior. It was put to him,—Stand a court-martial, or leave the "Cleopatra!"

He chose the latter alternative, and to the astonishment of everybody, joined the "Sybarite"—that "hell afloat." He made the choice deliberately: he wanted work, he wanted healthy excitement. Relden, who, besides the second master, had nobody but our acquaintances, Twigg and Bigg, on board, snapped at him. Singleton joined her, had a cabin to himself (one good thing, at all events), and found himself in a scene of dirt, noise, and cockroaches.

A few days afterwards a signal was made from the flag-ship for "Sybarite" and "Caitiff" to go outside, and try rate of sailing. The "Caitiff" was another brig, then in harbour, commanded by Kraggles, M.P., a little man, part prig, part *roué*—or *roué* turned regular, and made even somewhat duller than before by the process—as soiled linen gets spoiled by severe washing. Having become member for a corrupt borough, he turned Government hack, gave silent votes in the House, and made loud professions out of it; in due time got a command, and delivered parliamentary speeches to his ship's crew, with the capstan for a red-box. Poor little Kraggles!

The brigs weighed, Fontenoy "carrying on" in the "Syb," and Ivy watching her from the shore. The "Sybarite" was a Symondite, and worked like a weathercock. Off the brigs went in line, like two couples going "down the middle" of a country dance. It was a fresh breeze, with smooth water—just the combination for a Symondite! The "Sybarite" slashed through the waves like a knife through cream-cheese; tacked as fast as they could haul the main-yard; went three miles to windward of the "Caitiff" in the first hour they tried it on a bowline! It came on to blow hard—they double-reefed. The "Syb" played at fisticuffs with the head sea, soused everything fore and aft, beat the "Caitiff," and beat even the porpoises! The brigs bore up to try "going free." Up bore the "Sybarite," began to roll some thirty-five degrees, and to groan as if she was sea-sick—Symondites will. They shook a reef out; beat the "Caitiff" on her best point. "Never was such a triumph," said everybody.

Never, indeed! for it soon became evident *why* the trial had been ordered. Artful Sir Booby Booing, K.C.B.! Immediately that the report of the "Sybarite's" trumph was made, she was ordered to "prepare for sea," and received instructions to proceed to relieve the "Cowslip" on the west coast of Africa!

CHAPTER VI.

Hunc labor æquus,
Provehit, et pulcro reddit sua dona labori.
JUVENAL.

FONTENOY TO WELWYN.

"SYBARITE, GIBRALTAR.

* * * * * * *

"... AND thus, my dear Welwyn, light broke suddenly upon the darkness which had been gathering round me. This Cardinal Pira—this strange old man, whose acquaintance I made by an accident—was the priest who performed my father's marriage ceremony! You will find everything necessary in the documents which Ivy brings with her to England, in charge of Mr. Branton. People will say that this stroke of fortune was by an almost incredible incident. Well, it is natural for the commonplace to believe in the commonplace! Be it so.

"I suppose you will not see my father. I confess that I cannot understand what looks so like malignity on his part; my follies and extravagances, bad as they were, were scarcely potent enough impulses. It seems to me that his worldly pride has all his life been shocked by the remembrance of his early love-match. That a man should be ashamed of having been true to God and Nature! See what a Nemesis presides over affairs! *I* inherit from the enthusiasm of my mother's race. What was good in the marriage has blended itself with my nature—what was bad has avenged itself in his repentance. What sort of lady is the *novercа?* 'Twas a fine match, I suppose: *she,* perhaps, would like to rob me of my inheritance for her offspring. But these considerations are trivial; I pardon everybody and everything. I believe in the grand old ancient doctrine, that a man's fortune is in himself.

"You would laugh if you could see me in my wonderful cabin in this brig. I have leisure here to think: I retrace my career. What absurd follies—what pretensions and affectations! Yet, this I must say, *each folly was a spiritualism,* the offspring of some misguided spiritualism, but of spiritual origin, still! My search after pleasure was a misled love of beauty—each affectation was an aspiration distorted. I have never ceased to have hearty affection for my fellow-men, and, above all, reverence for the great.

"This life does me good: it is rugged as a path on the Alps; but in the silence and the solitude of the waters there is great healing. There is a noble beneficence in work. The first thing that happened to mankind was their getting turned out of a

garden, and it sometimes occurs to me that it was the greatest piece of luck the race ever met with!

"I have not much time, on board here, for reading, but I have a few choice spirits in my cabin. I have taken the advice of a literary man whom I met at Malta. I read C. Great in what he teaches, great in what he suggests, greater than all in what he *inspires*—that man has called from the depths of my being what good lay buried there, with a voice as 'twere the trump of a resurrection angel! The error of our time is not that of admiring too much, and therefore I am the more enthusiastic in what I say now. Have you read *Sartor Resartus?* What glances of insight—what solemn music—what rays of true beauty and tenderness are there! As for C.'s attacks in some of his works on sordid strongholds, *we* can appreciate them—we who know what kind of thing is the firing of shot and shell!——

* * * * * * *

"The wind is rising—we sail to night; a short time will bring me into a scene of strife and danger.——Do you know visions sometimes come across me of a future naval expedition as noble as those of Blake—as that of the Argonauts? I think of you and myself as serving in a fleet—greater than a war fleet, greater than a *mere* mercantile fleet—carrying to rich solitudes the elements of greatness—carrying out the members of a colony fired with the spirit of a nation! . . . But I must break off; we are going to bend new sails, and the fore-yard wants looking at.—Farewell, dear friend, yours faithfully,

"SINGLETON C. FONTENOY."

CHAPTER VII.

O quid solutis est beatius curis?
Quum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino
Labore fessi venimus Larem ad nostrum!
CATULLUS, *Carm.* 31.

Oh, what more sweet than the release from care?
Where the mind lays its burden down, and where,
Spent with far travel, we come home and spread
Our limbs to rest along the wished-for bed!
BON GAULTIER'S *Trans.*

TIME has passed. We make a leap across its gulf. It is not a very wide leap, but it must be made. We now find ourselves in the gunroom of the flag-ship at Portsmouth. The time is the "Ministerial crisis," prior to the coming in of the present Ministry.

A strange sight in a mess during a ministerial crisis! Promotions being dealt by alternate Governments to their friends, in

turn, a ministerial crisis is a naval crisis also. All the Government gentlemen are anxious; all the Opposition, eager. There are gentlemen sick of longing, and gentlemen dying for change. Everybody whose father has had a faithful promise from Sir John, everybody whose aunt is the bosom friend of Lady Mary; the many whose families "have always stuck to the party, by Jove, sir!" are in a terrible state of excitement.

Many of our old acquaintances, long variously dispersed about the world, are met in the flag-ship's gunroom. Lord Strawberry, who has become a pretentious mate, is there, eager for the advent of Lord John and his friends to power. Pug Welby has turned up, once more, a lieutenant, with a premature gout. Box, after being "spun" for his gunnery examination three times, has passed at last. *He* is not agitated by the crisis; his parents' views in politics are of a peculiarly violent order. Box must take his chance; he would probably be promoted at once if Mr. Feargus O'Connor got the Treasury. Poor Box!

The gunroom table of the "Elephant" was covered with papers, with a few bottles of pale ale here and there. The more anxious gentlemen were walking backwards and forwards. The morning mail had not come down.

"I knew it," said a strong Tory (*i. e.*, the son of one). "Peel can't stand. After abolishing the Corn Laws, what can you expect? *I* knew he would fling the party overboard, long ago. D—n it, he might promote his old friends, though, before going out."

"He's a traitor," said little Nobby, a Protectionist youngster, fiercely. Nobby's mamma was a peeress in her own right,—as Nobby was a fool in *his*. Nobby had been in the royal yacht for some time, where he turned out a miraculous rig,—where, as he asserted, her Majesty loved his intellectual conversation! Nobby spoke of Prince Albert as a "brick," and gave you to understand that he had proved himself to him (Nobby) to be a good judge of cigars.

"When the Whigs were tottering in 184—, they promoted twenty fellows in a batch!" said a mate.

"That's what I call public spirit," said Pug Welby, who had come down from the wardroom to hear what was going forward.

"Peel's conduct was not nautically correct," said Snigg (still clerk, punster, and "boozer").

"Why?" asked somebody, lazily awaiting the jest.

"A breeze arose, and he opened the ports. That's the way to swamp a ship!"

"Ugh!" exclaimed a melancholy Tory.

A midshipman came running in. "Steward, a glass of swizzle! I've got to board the 'Sybarite,' just back from the Coast, you know."

"'Sybarite,'" said Welby, pricking up his ears. "Who has her?"

"Fontenoy,—acting."

"Why, hang the fellow," said Pug, "he was only a midshipman when he went out."

"Ah, you see, Relden died of the fever,—doosed civil of Relden! Fontenoy had passed; the admiral gave him the acting command."

"You knew Fontenoy, Welby?"

"I should say so!" said Welby, involuntarily kicking out the leg that "Æneas" had broken for him.

"Hang it, here's the boatman!"

The door opened. There was a rush. The letters and papers were seized. There was the news! "Formation of a Cabinet." All up with the Peelites and Tories!

Strawberry ordered a bottle of champagne.

"I'll take some rum-and-water on the event," said Snigg; "not for my own sake, but for the sake of the country!"

There was the sound of a "call;" they were piping the side, on the middle deck, for somebody.

"Mr. Welby, a gentleman wants to see you."

Welby went on the middle deck. There was his visitor, a tall young man, somewhat sunburnt, with blue eyes and dark hair. Welby stared; he remembered some face like it, but softer and more boyish.

The stranger came and shook him ferociously by the hand. "God bless me, Pug, don't you know me?"

"Fontenoy!"

They shook hands again. "Come to my cabin," said Pug. "You are darker, and more staid-looking. Your voice is changed."

"Ah," said Fontenoy. "I can't say '*vox—et præterea nihil!*'"

"Just the same fellow," said Pug. "Come on."

They laughed, and walked hastily along to Welby's cabin; and then began the habitual interchange, so lively and so melancholy. Where is old ——, and ——, and ——! Who is dead; who has "gone to the dogs;" who has made unmentionable marriages? One feels the thrill of memory as one writes of it! Where is fair-haired Frank, with whom I jested and played—he whom I loved so well on the shores of the old Corcyra? He died on the deadly Coast, and the sea-nymphs made rings of his hair.

"Pannikin is dead—died of the dropsy," said Welby.

"Ah!"

"Times are changing," went on Pug, moralizing; "everything changes but my aunt."

"You are the same fellow as ever, I see," laughed Fontenoy.

"*She* never changes! Empires perish, but she remains immoveable—like a mummy—very like a mummy!"

Singleton returned on board soon; he had to pay off the brig, and was confoundedly pestered about the "books," which had to be "made up." The Admiralty confirmed his "acting" appointment, and he emerged in the world a full-blown lieutenant. He hurried up to town, we may easily believe, at no ordinary pace, doing everything "regardless of expense;" for to say nothing of his private means, he had a considerable sum of prize-money due to him for capturing the "Santo Pokero" slaver, with five hundred slaves on board.

He came back from his agents to his hotel; his father was in the north: he scarcely knew where to find anybody, and was ignorant entirely of the localities of the metropolis. However, he recollected Mr. Frederick Lepel, M.P., and sought his name out in a "Parliamentary Companion," where he found the following:—

"Lepel, Frederick, Huskdale, son of A. Lepel, Esquire, of Dunreddin, Rockshire, first returned 184—, on Liberal principles."——Singleton grinned.——"Is attached to the principles of the British Constitution, and will suffer no infringement of it, further than may be necessary to the great principles of progress. A free-trader; will agree to an equitable Church reform. Author of a 'Letter on the Currency,' 'Cotton v. Cant,' and other pamphlets. Rockshire, Dunreddin; Grosvenor Street, Albert Club, —— Square; Calico Club, Piccadilly!"

"Bravo, Fred!" soliloquised Singleton, as he read this imposing paragraph. Without heart or genius (though one would not speak harshly of 'such a good fellow'), Fred was now a "prosperous gentleman." He entered the House an easy Liberal—watched his time, spoke a little good sense, seasoned with jocosity; got on;—coquetted with the League—watched that;—subscribed 50*l.* to it in the nick of time—was advertised to be at one of its Covent Garden meetings, but fell ill in the afternoon. He was now watching the crisis, and speculating whether his liberalism was the right quantity for a Whig official.

Singleton took a cab, and was driven to Grosvenor Street. Frederick was "at home," was just going to dine; asked him to dinner—indeed, he gave him a hearty recognition, and was civil in the extreme, particularly talking away to amuse him, and being very lively.

"Well, Frederick," said Singleton, quietly, as they began dessert, "have you seen my father lately?"

"Eh? why no; the truth is, we are not on over good terms." He looked flurried a little.

"Where is Welwyn—do you see him sometimes?"

"Not exactly—no; he is out of my way. However, I helped him to getting his commandership: you know he is a commander?"

"Yes."

"It was through me. Lord Belden got him appointed to the Royal Yacht—a good thing for a young man! Lord Clangour, I mean—you know the old earl is dead?"

"I had not heard it."

"Yes,—awfully sudden."

"Let me see,—you were just getting friendly with Lord Belden, when I left home."

Frederick looked down at the plate before him, and inspected the plumage of the cockatoo. Singleton had touched on a failure.

"That's all over," he said, with a sort of memory of a sneer on his lip; "there was Augusta to thank for that!"

"She refused him?"

"Yes, coronet and all! Not that the 'all,' or anything but the rank and fortune, was worth having."

"I thought you rather liked him."

"Oh—a little. But, hang the fellow, with all *his* chances, to be beaten by Welwyn?"

"Welwyn is a very superior person, and most certainly as much a gentleman as any man in the empire."

"My dear sir, we are all gentlemen, and some of us superior persons. That is not sufficient."

"I suppose your sister liked Welwyn, at all events."

"She has been at some pains to show it," said Frederick, drily.

"How do you mean? Welwyn, I know, of course,—though I am a stranger to all the particulars,—of course, I say, behaved most honourably."

"Yes, no doubt; that was all the worse, perhaps. If he had given me a loophole!" said Frederick. His eye brightened, and he balanced the nutcrackers, in a peculiar way, between his forefinger and thumb, and across his hand.

Singleton felt disgusted, and involuntarily moved his wine-glass a little way off.

"Well," continued Frederick, in a tone that seemed to show a wish to close the subject; "the thing's done. With his profession, her eight thousand of her own, and whatever means he may have,—they must do what they can."

"What—do you mean to say they are married?" cried Singleton.

"Just so. They live in the country, in the domestic-virtuous style, quite like what you see in an epitaph! Pass the wine."

Singleton felt a joy which he did not care to show, at this

news. He willingly changed the subject, and they talked away about the Slave Trade, the Arms Bill, and the Corn Laws.

In the evening, Frederick took him to a great gathering—a "brilliant" party,—one of those assemblages which Jigger of the "Bustard," summed up in this brief description: "Places where you are infernally hot, and must not swear." Fontenoy very soon lost himself—wandered about the forest of people, and ultimately took refuge on a seat, the next to what is called a very fine woman. The lady and he got into conversation—he never knew how—and she began a sort of Semiramis flirtation with him. They talked about poetry, about scenery, about music.

"There is Mr. Lepel, dancing," she said, as the conversation flagged a moment.

"Ah, so I see," said Singleton. "Do you know him?"

"Oh, yes. What wit he has!"

"Yes," said Singleton; "the family have all talent."

"You know the family, then?"

"Old neighbours of mine!" said Singleton, smiling.

"Neighbours. Oh, ho! you are a Rockshire man, then!" said the lady, with vivacity.

"Just so," said Fontenoy, with a bow.

"Let me guess your name. I know all the county names." ("Queer woman enough," thought my hero.)

"Beaconsfield,—no, they're dull!"

Singleton bowed like the Comte d'Artois.

"Pierrepoint, Temple, Selwyn, or Haslewood?"

"No, I must save you the trouble"—— but at that instant some female friend of the strange lady came up. Singleton resigned his seat, and moved away a little.

A couple passed close by. Singleton heard one of them say. "How well Mrs. Fontenoy is looking to-night!" He started round, and looked in the direction in which the speaker glanced. Plainly, the strange lady was Mrs. Fontenoy.

"Yes," answered the other, "she bears the separation very well." They laughed, and moved on through the crush.

"God bless me!" soliloquised Singleton, as he walked to his hotel; "fancy a man's flirting with his stepmother! And they are separated, eh?"

CHAPTER VIII.

Quis deus magis ah magis
Est petendus amantibus?
Quem colent homines magis
Cælitum? O Hymenæe, Hymen,
Hymen, O Hymenæe.

CATULLUS.

"One hour more," said Welwyn, looking at the time-piece: "will it ever come, Ivy?"

"Don't tease her, dear."

"Do I look very pale?"

Excepting that particular rose tint which you have acquired in England."

"The scenery is not equal to Sicily, is it?" asked Welwyn. facetiously.

And yet it was very absurd; the plains of Hertfordshire are as fine as the plains of Smyrna, and *they* are called the finest in the world. Perch yourself on Shenley Hill, reader, and thank God you were born an Englishman!

This conversation took place between three Welwyns, whom we know, in the parlour of a house of quiet respectability in Hertfordshire. It was summer-time; they were standing at the window and looking at the landscape, except every now and then when they looked at the time-piece.

"Fancy Singleton's talking to his stepmother without knowing her!" said Welwyn.

"And fancy Frederick making so much of him; Frederick, who has behaved so ill to us all," said Augusta.

"Frederick has good points," said the optimist.

"Poor Mr. Fontenoy, the elder, and those horrible railways," Augusta went on; "that was all Frederick's doing, too. I wish people would learn the difference of meaning between ambition and getting on! Singleton is 'ambitious,' the other wants to 'get on.' There is a mighty difference."

So spoke the fair Augusta; Ivy sighed, and went to the window. "Really, there are too many flowers in this room: I feel quite faint."

"Come into the air, dear," said her brother. "Hush!"

The wind among the laurels! The wind swept through the garden, and brought a handful of apple-blossoms in at the open window, and made the feathers of the poor little canary ruffle like flames of gold.

There was a sound again, harder, distincter: the sound of wheels.

"Here he is!" cried Welwyn.

"Let me be alone when he comes," said Ivy, in an agitated voice.

The gate clinks, the steps sound; Singleton was heard talking loudly to Welwyn. Augusta ran down to see him, and received a fraternal salute. Then Ivy heard steps bounding along the stairs, and in came Singleton. He paused a moment in surprise; all Ivy's agitation had merged into joy and delight. "Bless me, how sweet you are grown!" exclaimed Singleton. And, indeed, Ivy was wonderfully improved; not that she was not always beautiful,—of course she was. But happiness and tranquillity of mind, their soft flow feeds beauty as the river feeds the lily. And Singleton, as he embraced her, fancied that there was all the North in the clear lustre of her face, and all the South in the soft warmth of her lips.

Welwyn and his young wife came into the room, and the four formed a happy party.

Singleton took Welwyn's arm, and moved with him to the window and whispered; the girls, having nothing better to do, kissed each other.

"You have not seen him yet?" said Welwyn.

"No. We have interchanged letters, though; we are friends again. He offers Heatherby for us to stay at. It's too pretentious for me. You know our favourite Laman Blanchard's sweet lines.

> "'It is not in the mountains,
> Nor the palaces of pride,
> That love will fold his wings up
> And rejoicingly abide;
> But in meek and humble natures
> His home is ever found,
> *As the lark that sings in heaven*
> *Builds his nest upon the ground!*'"

When you marry, reader, spare yourself the unhappy accompaniments of form and ostentation: women who giggle, and men who make speeches. Do as my hero did, and plight your troth before God, in a village church, at a simple altar, and with a humble pastor. Nature will be kind, if you are kind to her, and mock her not with carriages and champagne: thou shalt have the Muses for thy bridesmaids, and thy "favours" shall be the violet and the rose!

Here ends the story of Singleton Fontenoy. The last time I saw him, he was reading a "Latter-Day Pamphlet."

And here wakes up the author from a dream of his youth.

THE END.

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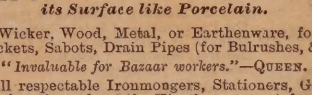
TRADE 

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